KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION IN THE LEARNING COMMUNITY:

A CASE STUDY OF THE SHANGHAI ZHABEI LEARNING COMMUNITY

by

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(Under the Direction of Sharan B. Merriam)

ABSTRACT

China is in the process of implementing a learning society through the establishment of learning cities, learning organizations, and learning communities. Even though the structure of the learning community system is in place, practitioners have found it hard to recruit learners when learners' needs were neglected. The traditional knowledge transmission model where the learners passively accept knowledge from the "authorized" instructor was criticized for not taking into account learners' experiences and the social and cultural context of the knowledge (Buffington, 2003).

Due to sparse research addressing knowledge construction within a geographical learning community, the purpose of this study was to understand how knowledge is constructed in the Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community in China. This embedded case study employed the constant comparative method to analyze data collected from interviews, observations and document analysis. The community for the case was one of the 18 districts in Shanghai.

Data analysis revealed five patterns of knowledge construction and the factors shaping knowledge construction. Specifically, the five patterns of knowledge construction are: radiation, circulation, simulation, socialization, and contextualization. Factors that shape knowledge

construction include: the socio-cultural factors of the political bureaucracy, economic reform, and traditional Chinese values of hierarchy and moderation; factors specific to the learning community also shaped knowledge construction. Those factors are government support, learning embedded in community development, creation of a harmonious learning environment, comprehensive learning networks, and lineal and non-lineal learning structures. Four conclusions have been reached. First, knowledge construction is a socially embedded collective learning process. Second, tools such as cultural products and discourses promote knowledge construction. Third, multi-layer networks and learning structures shape knowledge construction in the learning community. Fourth, the hierarchical social system, conservative social values, and economic reforms shape knowledge construction.

Implications for practitioners and policy makers are discussed and suggestions are offered for future research.

INDEX WORDS: Social constructionism; Knowledge construction; Knowledge construction patterns; Learning community; Learning communities in China; Learning and community development; collective learning; Learning tools such as cultural products, discourse, and social networks; Learning and norms/values, political system, and economic reform; Embedded case study

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DEDICATION

My Dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my father, Longshan Chang, who passed away in June of 2007. My father lived through the great social changes in China when he was a teenager and survived the Great Chinese Famine (1959-1961). His tribulations made him a very strong and wise man. He contributed his whole life to raising his children and teaching them to be independent and cheerful, to love life, and to wholeheartedly pursue their dreams. I inherited his appearance, his personality, and to a certain degree, his wisdom. I could not have achieved my goals without his guidance, encouragement and support. The only thing I regret is that I did not have more time to spend with him and to share more of my interesting stories with him.

I was born in a culture that does not believe in God and Heaven, but I do hope that my father is in Heaven now, looking down upon me, smiling and watching over me with that twinkle in his eye, just as he did when I was a little girl. His passion was playing chess. I wish he enjoys playing chess in Heaven with his new friends.

I have him in my heart, always.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to address current social problems, China is engaged in building a harmonious society. These social problems include the great economic gap between the rich and the poor, tensions between the upper class and lower class, worsening conditions of the economically disadvantaged people, unemployment, and the declining of social values. A harmonious society is expected to address these problems. Building a lifelong learning society is regarded as one of the most important strategies for developing a harmonious society in China. A series of policies for building a harmonious society and a learning society directly promoted learning community development in China.

Social Changes in China

Before economic reform in China, administrative order and the will of the leaders played an important role in decision making in every aspect of Chinese society. Beginning in 1978, the Chinese government launched an economic policy to stimulate the vitality of the national economy and catch up with other modernized countries (Qi &Tang, 2004). The traditional planned economy model was gradually changed into a market economy model. To reinforce the position of the market economy in China, in 1992, Deng, Xiao Ping, the most powerful communist leader at that time and who initiated the economic reform in China, made a speech in South China to encourage the development of the market economy (Deng, 1992). In October 1992, at the 14th National People's Representative Meeting, Jiang, Zemin, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China, clarified the key position of a market economy structure in China

(Jiang, 1992). China stepped into a market economy, focusing mainly on economic development with high efficiency supported through science and technology.

China developed quickly under this economic development policy. Hu (2005) noted that in China, the government intervened in the economic development by giving priorities to a small group of people and to south and east China. With economic development, the economic gap between the south and north, and the rich and poor, is becoming larger and larger. The rich did not support the poor as Deng expected. Some people got rich quickly by colluding with political power in the government; some people became rich by exploiting their poor employees. The economic gap between the rich and rich not only made poor people even poorer, it also deprived poor people of their political and cultural rights when their basic requirements and their voice were ignored by society. When the poor did not get the help needed to make their lives better, they directed their hatred toward the rich. Thus, the economic gap has fostered social conflict (Hu, 2005; Wang, 2005).

The new strong wealthy class appeared when the gap between rich and poor became larger. Sun (2005) noticed that in the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s, even though there was a gap between rich and poor, people with different positions still lived in traditional communities. From the late 1990s, in many regions and cities, there appeared many rich communities with correspondingly different living, cultural and aesthetic tastes compared to those of the ordinary people in other communities. The new rich class has formed a strong alliance to get more profits from society. Through financial support, this rich class tried to control policy making and implementation, to influence the public media and the academic community, and to make the disadvantaged depend more on them (Sun, 2005). The results are that the whole society is mainly divided into two big classes — the rich class and the poor class. Additionally, the rich become

richer and the poor become poorer, and some government officials illegally colluded with the rich class and lost their sense of justice in decision-making (Sun, 2005).

The gap between rich and poor breaks with traditional Chinese values and ideology. In a market economy, economic conditions are regarded by society as one important benchmark to judge a person's social position, which has great influence on workers, farmers, and administrative leaders. Wang (2005) argued that in a planned economic system, workers, peasants, and administrative leaders were the political beneficiaries. However, in a market economy system, the living conditions of peasants and workers become worse and worse. For the administrative leaders, even though they have political power, their economic conditions are much lower than that of the owners of the private enterprises, or even lower than that of the managers in companies, whose social positions in the planned economic system were very low. Some of these administrative leaders tried to increase their economic conditions through illegal channels. Wang (2005) argued that when the economic condition criterion was over emphasized, many people would immorally pursue economic benefit. They devalued honesty, justice, and equality, and they became utilitarian and materialistic. The traditional Chinese values and ideology were challenged.

Unemployment is another significant social problem resulting from economic reform. Before 1978, under the planned economy model China believed everyone was economically equal. After 1978 when China implemented a market economy model, employees' "steel bowl" (stable job and salary) was broken: employees were no longer the lifelong "family members" of the employers. In order to decrease redundancy and increase working efficiency, the state-owned enterprises launched large-scale downsizing in the early 1990s (Xin, 2004). Those aged 40 to 50, without higher education or working skills, were impacted greatly by this unemployment storm

(Gu & Wang, 2004). The residential communities, rather than the work places, became the protective harbors of the unemployed.

Chinese society has had great changes in ideology, politics, economy, and social structure since 1978. These changes are categorized as follows(Zhang, 1994, as cited in Zhang & Zhang, 2001): (a) ideology change. Economic growth replaced political revolution and class struggle. Economy development is the focus of the nation; (b) economic system change. A traditional centralized planned economy shifted to a socialist market economy; (c) social structure change. Social structure shifted from a closed system to an open system that has more connections with other countries; people have more freedom to select their jobs; (d) social mode change. Social mode gradually changed from a traditional rural society to a modernized industry society where the speed of urbanization accelerated; and (e) change due to the influence of globalization. China has gradually integrated into the global community after it joined the WTO in 2001. All of these changes increased with Chinese economic development, but at the same time, the changes produced many social problems. Chinese leaders realized these problems under the shadow of strong economic development and decided to address these problems with new national development strategies. To relieve these social problems and change the unhealthy social values produced under the economic reforms, and at the same time to meet the challenge of technology innovation, globalization and world-wide competition, the current leadership of Chairman Hu Jintao called on the whole society to make an effort to create a harmonious and wealthy society (Hu, 2005). Building a democratic lifelong learning society is one of the important strategies for developing a harmonious and peaceful society in China in the 21st century.

Education Reform and Learning Community Development

Hutchins (1968) assumes that a learning society is the social order that facilitates learning and development through part-time education (Jarvis, 2007). Jarvis suggests that in a learning society, "a majority of social institutions make provision for individuals to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses within global society" (Jarvis, 2007, p. 100). In China, it is believed that a learning society should nurture a learning atmosphere in social units such as cities, communities, organizations and institutes and provide convenient and efficient learning opportunities for everyone throughout his/her whole life. These cities, communities, organizations, and institutions are called learning cities, learning communities, learning organizations, and learning institutions (Ye, 2005). Ye (2005) suggested that the term "learning communities" be applied only to those communities that provide lifelong-learning opportunities equally for their residents and promote harmonious community development.

After the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg (CONFINTEA V), Faure et al.'s (1972) report on lifelong learning was translated and introduced in China. The Chinese government promoted the idea of lifelong learning and tried to create a lifelong learning atmosphere in society. On December 24, 1998, the Chinese Ministry of Education released the document titled *Action Plan of the Education Promotion toward the 21st Century*. In this plan, adult education was required to "carry on community education experiment work, to gradually establish and improve the lifelong education system and to improve the qualities of the public" and to establish the basic lifelong learning system in 2010 ("*Action Plan of the Education Promotion toward the 21st Century,* "1998). In the 2000s, China proposed a series of policies to build up a harmonious society to address the social conflicts by nurturing a learning society and

learning community. In 2001, the National Ministry of Education announced the first list of the

national community education pilots to promote learning community development ("*Notice of

the first list of the national community education pilots by National Ministry of Education,*"

2001).

In May 2001, at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit on Human Resource

Capacity Building, Chairman Jiang Zemin suggested closing the difference between south and

north China through human resource development and building up a lifelong education system

and learning society (Jiang, 2001). Jiang's speech was quoted by communist party members as

their performance criteria. On Nov 8, 2002, Chairman Jiang Zemin reported at the 16th National

People's Representative Meeting that China should construct lifelong learning systems and form

a learning society for everyone throughout his/her whole life (Jiang, 2005).

In December 2003, the document titled *The Chinese Communist Party and the State

Council's Decision on Strengthening Cultivation of the Talented people* pointed out that China

should strengthen the construction of a lifelong education system and promote the formation of a

learning society; China should broadcast the idea of lifelong learning throughout the society,

actively promote learning organizations and learning communities, sufficiently utilize social

resources, cultural resources, and education resources to improve the broad and multiple-level

education network and build up a Chinese-style lifelong education system (China National

Education Bureau, 2007). *The Education Promotion Action Plan for 2003-2007* stipulated a

focus on gaining new knowledge and improving the skills to build up learning enterprises,

learning organizations, learning communities and learning cities (China National Education

Bureau, 2007).

To promote a lifelong learning society and to reduce the social problems, starting in 2001, 114 national community education pilots and hundreds of local community education pilots, which play a main role in promoting learning communities, were established in China ("*Notice of the first, second, third and fourth lists of the national community education pilots*, " 2001, 2003, 2006, 2007). Systems of organization infrastructure, leadership infrastructure, and resource integration infrastructure were built up in most learning communities.

In China, government at all levels from local to national is the main force to push the learning community movement; administrators and instructors are playing an important role in designing and operating the different learning activities, and learners are persuaded to participate in these learning activities. However, after a learning community's macro-organizational system is built up, the practitioners feel that it is difficult to mobilize local people to participate in learning activities organized by the local governments and education bureaus. Some have speculated that the instructor-centered learning model where the instructor is regarded as the knowledge expert and the learners accept such knowledge passively is the reason for low participation (Personal communication with Lee, July 30, 2007). In recent years, with the influence of globalization and reforms in the areas of community, politics and education, learning communities exchanged their experiences with each other and have adapted some learning experiences and ideas from Western countries. Chinese leaders and practitioners responsible for the learning communities are gradually becoming aware of the necessity of incorporating learners themselves in the knowledge creation process (Personal communication with Lee, July 30, 2007). That is, instead of accepting authorized knowledge passively from instructors and leaders in the classroom setting, learners should be encouraged to construct new knowledge through a social interaction process that has connections with their lives and careers

(Grbich, 2007; Hofer & Pintrich, 1997). However, in practice, little is known about how to integrate learners into the knowledge construction process, especially in the context of Chinese learning community that is strongly pushed by government from the top level and is influenced by the traditional instructor-centered learning model. This knowledge construction in a geographical learning community is the focus of this research.

Learning Communities

In recent years, research on the learning community has been booming. The learning community is being applied in different social units such as learning groups, professional training programs, classrooms, companies, and communities.

The learning community has a variety of definitions. Zhu and Baylen (2005) noted that the term *learning community* has been used to refer to a number of approaches, models, and learning environments. Based on the literature, the definition of learning community can be understood from two approaches. From the non-geographical approach, *learning community* refers to a network where a group of people who have similar interests meet together to share their practical or professional experiences. *Learning Community* is not defined by geography but rather by interests held in common and can even exist online worldwide. For example, Himmelmann (1994) assumed that the broadest definition of learning community is that a learning community is composed of a group of people or institutions that promote systematic societal change and share or own the responsibilities, resources, and rewards together (as cited in Kilpatrick, Barrett & Jones, 2003). Developed by Wenger (1998), "community of practice" as a unit where people engage in social practice to share knowledge from each other over time is one form of a non-geographical learning community. The participants in these communities of practice learn

together by focusing on problems that are directly related to their work (Wenger & Snyder, 2000).

Geographical learning communities are generally regarded as one part of the architecture of building a learning society. From the geographical approach, *learning community* refers to the administrative places such as towns, districts, streets and families, where industry, education, business, and government work together and integrate their resources to create an equal and convenient lifelong learning environment for everyone. Building a learning community is a process of integrating the resources from districts, streets and families in local administrative communities and incorporating the efforts from government, business and educational institutions (Ye, 2005).

As opposed to the traditional education model, in a learning community, it is essential for learners to share knowledge actively through collaboration. Kilpatrick, Barrett, and Jones (2003) state that the common characteristics of the learning community include: a common purpose as well as interest among the members, collaboration and partnership in learning, and respect for diversity in the learning process. To share knowledge collaboratively, a safe and an empowered learning environment is necessary. In this environment, learners' diversity and experiences are respected and valued, and group identity and mutual commitment are developed gradually (Lawrence, 1997). Learning activities in a geographical learning community are situated in the social and cultural context where learners live and have close connections with daily life, their work, or local community issues (Moore & Brooks, 2000; Stein & Imel, 2002; Wenger, 1998; Zhu & Baylen, 2005).

Chinese learning communities are geographically based and share many of the characteristics of learning communities everywhere. Literature about the learning communities

in China from 1989-2006 in the VIP and Wangfang databases, two of the largest journal/theses databases in China, indicates that in recent years, there have emerged several orientations focusing on the topic of the learning community. These orientations include: (a) the definitions (Ye, 2000, Hu , 2002; Huang, 2000; Huang, 2004; Wang, 2002; Zhang, 2003); (b) the functions of the learning community, including culture education, moral education, economic-technical education, literacy education, leisure education, urbanization education (Chen, 2004; Hu, 2003; Huang, 2004; Wang, 2003); (c) relations between the learning community and other areas such as urban development, community party development, library and informational resource development (China Monthly Report 2002; Lv, 2004; Wang, 2003); (d) theoretical bases of the learning community (Shao & Wang, 2005); (e) models of building a learning community (Shao & Wang , 2005); and (f) strategies for building a learning community (Fan, 2003; Hu, 2002; Qiu, 2004; Wang, 2004; Wu, 2005; Wu, Wang & Wu , 2005; Yang & Huang, 2006 ; Zhai, 2004; Zhang; 2004). Resource integration and leadership support were regarded as the essential strategies for building a learning community in China.

Most of the research on the learning community in China has focused on macro-level topics such as functions of the learning community, leadership and organizational systems, resource incorporation and sharing, etc. Most of the authors have suggested that the key to building a learning community is to nurture a good learning atmosphere and to develop the learning system and organizational mechanism from the top-level. Researchers have intensively discussed how to build a learning community based on the roles and the functions of the agency and the system, but few have mentioned how learners learn in learning communities and how to initiate learning activities to promote knowledge construction in the context of the learning community.

Knowledge Construction

The nature of knowledge construction has been discussed extensively in the literature, including the epistemological foundation of knowledge construction, cognitive and social-cultural views of knowledge construction, and the tools facilitating the knowledge construction process. As the epistemological foundation of knowledge construction, social constructionism uncovers how social reality is created, institutionalized, and becomes the routine of our daily life. Berger and Luckmann (1967) analyzed how common sense knowledge is socially constructed and is institutionalized into the structure of the organization and society that can be socially controlled and accessed by the public.

In the knowledge construction process, knowledge is shared, selected, and institutionalized, facilitated by different tools. For Vygotsky, the most important for human mastery is to create and make use of "artificial" stimuli including the tools of the culture, language, the toys in the play, etc. (Vygotsky, 1978). The functions of tools such as culture, social interaction, discussion/dialogue, socialization, and technology in the knowledge construction process have been broadly explored. For example, Lizardo (2006) provided the possibilities about how to use culture as a construction tool. Cross, Parker, Prusak, and Borgatti (2001) analyzed knowledge creation from a human relationship perspective. They introduced social networks to facilitate knowledge creation and knowledge sharing in organizations. Others have described how computer tools, social and cultural activities, and communication networks are used to construct and transfer knowledge (Enyedy, 2003; Farell & Holkner, 2002; Hammer & Collins, 2002).

Types of dialogue, discussion, and social interaction patterns influence how knowledge is socially constructed. Different types of dialogue have different functions in knowledge creation

and require teachers and learners to have different roles. For example, Schwarz, Dreyfus, and Hershkowits (2004) proposed five kinds of classroom dialogues: grounding dialogue, prospective dialogue, critical dialogue, reflective and lesson delivery dialogue. Based on the theories of constructivism, Hammer and Collins (2002) reported how students in a graduate education seminar constructed and disseminated knowledge through an iterative process of critical dialogue and collegial critique. Arvaja and Hakkinen (2002) provided four patterns of interaction in the process of knowledge sharing: joint critical knowledge building, tutoring, joint uncritical knowledge sharing, and leader dominance. Their findings indicate that educators should use different types of interactions based on participants' different knowledge levels and different learning purposes.

In the knowledge construction process, learners' different perspectives will be sieved through the filter woven by macro socio-cultural factors and the micro learning environment. These macro social cultural factors and the micro learning environment will influence what knowledge will be selected and institutionalized into publicly accepted knowledge. For example, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory indicates that learners adjust their behaviors through negotiating and mediating their needs, behaviors, attitudes, and expectations from society. Crotty (1998) argued that people view the world through the lens influenced by their culture, which leads them to select some things and to ignore others (Crotty, 1998). Research on the learning community also shows that an authentic and collaborative learning environment facilitated by different tools is more conducive to knowledge inspiration and sharing among learners compared to the traditional instructor-centered knowledge-transmission learning environment. Learning contexts shape knowledge construction, though some scholars also worry that some good ideas

might be dismissed when constructionists believe that there are useful interpretations in certain context, but no universal true or valid interpretations (Crotty, 1998; Duffy & Cunningham, 1996).

The literature discussed the general process of knowledge construction and the influences of socio-cultural and instructional factors on the knowledge construction process. However, in literature, there is little research discussing how knowledge is socially constructed in the context of the learning community. More specifically, what are the knowledge construction patterns in different learning units such as learning groups, classroom project teams and collective cultural activities? And how do the different tools and factors support/constrain knowledge construction patterns?

The term *pattern* originated from architecture to codify the common elements or themes of complex structures. In architecture, a pattern is abstracted from the details of particular buildings. Architects use patterns to capture the essentials that can be used elsewhere (Kelly& McDermid, n. d.). The term *pattern* is also used in other fields such as software development. Software designers use patterns "as a means of capturing the repeatable and successful elements of a software design" (Kelly& McDermid, n.d., p.2).

There are different levels of patterns. For example, Riehle and Züllighoven (1995) differentiated the three levels of pattern language in developing software systems: the first level refers to the design metaphors, which are the design ideas providing "a guideline and a perspective on how software systems for a given application domain should be designed" (p.3); the second level refers to the design patterns which "transform our design ideas into a concrete software design" (p.3), with these design patterns emerging out of experience in designing software systems; and the third level refers to the programming patterns, including idioms or

fundamental patterns which are "basic means and forms for expressing software building blocks" (p.3).

Knowledge construction patterns are generated from concrete knowledge construction practices. Knowledge construction patterns could be interpreted as the general principles, the repeatable and successful elements and structure in the processes of knowledge construction. More specifically, knowledge construction patterns could be understood in three levels: the first level refers to the general principles or ideas of how knowledge is socially constructed in the context of a learning community; based on these general ideas, the second level refers to the repeatable and successful elements and structures in knowledge construction processes in the different learning units, such as in classrooms, in groups, in projects teams, and in collective cultural activities; and the third level refers to the practical tips about how to apply these knowledge construction patterns in learning practices.

Statement of the Problem

China is in the process of implementing a learning society through the establishment of learning cities, learning organizations, and learning communities. However, even though the structure of the learning community system is in place, practitioners have found it hard to recruit learners. Influenced by globalization, practitioners have begun to realize that in the knowledge creation process, learners need to be prominently involved. Learners should actively construct knowledge based on their experiences instead of passively accepting the knowledge from instructors. However, in practice, little is known about how to integrate learners into the knowledge construction process. Researchers of the learning community have discussed the definitions, functions, structures and the characteristics of the learning community, and most of the Chinese researchers of the learning community have focused on macro-level topics such as

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functions of the learning community, leadership and organizational systems, and resource incorporation and sharing. Few have addressed how to initiate learning activities to promote knowledge construction in the context of a geographical learning community. Research on knowledge construction has identified the epistemological basis, the process, and the tools used in knowledge construction. Some scholars (Crotty, 1998; Duffy & Cunningham, 1996) have also identified factors influencing how knowledge is selected and institutionalized in the knowledge construction process. However, little research examines how knowledge is socially constructed within the learning communities. More specifically, what are the knowledge construction patterns in different learning units such as learning groups, classrooms and project teams? And how do the different factors shape knowledge construction patterns?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand how knowledge is socially constructed in a geographical learning community in China. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the patterns of knowledge construction in the learning community?

2. What are the social-cultural factors that shape the knowledge construction in the learning community?

3. What are the learning community factors that shape the knowledge construction in the learning community?

4. How do social-cultural and learning community factors together shape the knowledge construction?

Significance of the Study

By examining knowledge construction in a context that is traditionally highly structured and power centralized but has been influenced in recent years by globalization and educational, political, and economic reforms, the research contributes to knowledge construction theory by generating patterns of knowledge construction, identifying the socio-cultural and learning community factors that shaped knowledge construction. The research also contributes to the knowledge base of the learning community. To date, research on the learning community has focused more on the collaborative and empowered learning environment but less about how a learning community promotes the process of knowledge construction.

The research informs Chinese policy makers about how to develop an effective interventional and mediating learning system to facilitate learning efficiently in learning communities. The research also enlightens the practitioners and educators about how to use different tools such as cultural products, discourse and social networks to facilitate knowledge construction and how to apply the patterns of knowledge construction in learning activities.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to understand how knowledge is socially constructed in a geographical learning community in China. The goals of the study were to generate the patterns of knowledge construction and identify the factors that shape knowledge construction in a geographical learning community in Shanghai, China. This chapter includes two parts. In the first part, I review the literature of knowledge construction, including the knowledge construction process and the tools and signs facilitating knowledge construction; in the second part, I review the mediating systems including the macro-socio-cultural structures and the micro-learning community environments that may shape knowledge construction.

Knowledge Construction

Polanyi (1966) classified knowledge into two categories: explicit knowledge, referring to knowledge that could be transmitted in formal, systematic language, and tacit knowledge that is rooted in action, commitment, and specific contexts and is hard to formalize and communicate. Knowledge construction in this project refers to the process of how learners construct knowledge and transfer tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge.

The nature of knowledge construction has been discussed extensively in the literature, including the epistemological foundation of knowledge construction, cognitive and social-cultural views of knowledge construction, and the tools facilitating the knowledge construction process.

Knowledge Construction Process

Constructionism consists of several approaches, such as radical, social, physical, evolutionary, postmodern, social, and information-processing constructivism (Murphy, 1997). In this study, I applied social constructionism to understand how knowledge was socially constructed. Social constructionism assumes meaning is created based on an agreement or a consensus "arrived at for the time being by communities of knowledgeable peers" (Bruffee, 1986, p.777). It emphasizes the culture and context in the meaning creation process.

A major focus of social constructionism is to uncover how meaning is created and institutionalized and becomes the routine and norm that guide our actions. The social constructionism view of how knowledge is socially construction is based on the assumption about how reality is constructed. Berger and Luckmann (1967) believed that reality is subjective and objective. Reality is subjective when people who participate in it have different understandings/meanings for it. People interacting with each other form typifications for the activities they perform. These typifications eventually become habitualized into participants' reciprocal roles. When these reciprocal roles become routinized, we describe these typified reciprocal interactions as institutionalized. In the process of this institutionalization, people form an agreed understanding for the reality they enact; this institutionalized reality is the objective reality, and it is embedded into the structure of the institution and society. This whole process indicates that before the reality is institutionalized into the social or organizational structure, people have different understandings/meanings for it; people interact with each other and construct the reality from different perspectives. Social reality, therefore, is said to be socially constructed. This process is shown below in figure 2.1. First, people have different understandings for reality; this is the subjective reality. These different understandings will be

typified into patterns such as 1, 2, 3 and 4. Four is the common pattern that participants accept.

Institutionalization is the typified knowledge and is embedded into the structure of the

organization and becomes objective reality—this is institutionalized knowledge or objective

knowledge that all participants accept.

Subjective reality   Typification   Institutionalization-- objective reality
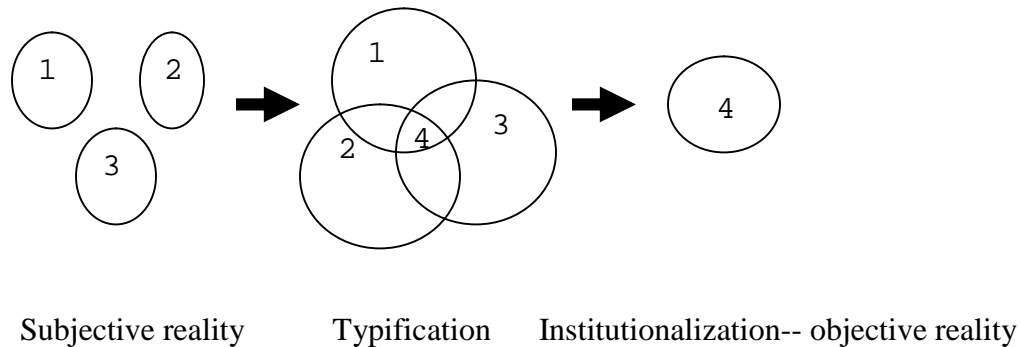
Figure 2.1. How people construct the reality

In the knowledge construction process, as in the reality construction process, people

provide different meanings and experiences that have relevant structures; these relevant-

structured meanings and experiences in interaction are gradually typified into the specific

patterns. These patterns are repeated and are habitualized into the institutionalized knowledge,

which can be controlled and transmitted explicitly to others (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Berger

and Luckmann's knowledge construction model lays out how tacit knowledge is constructed and

institutionalized into objective or explicit knowledge. In this knowledge construction process,

different tools and signs play important roles in facilitating learners' learning activities.

Tools in the Knowledge Construction Process

Heylighen (1993) suggested that for social constructionists, the criterion for judging

knowledge is consensus among different learners. Prawat and Floden (1994) regarded the

knowledge construction process as a process of meaning negotiation in which compromise and

consensus are sought to achieve an agreement, or the agreement and disagreement are clarified in

order to solve the problems and obstacles. Heylighen (1993) and Prawat and Floden's (1994) opinions imply that there are two points that need to be addressed in the knowledge construction process: one is the sharing of the different ideas, reaching a compromise and achieving the consensus; the other is challenging the conflicting ideas and selecting the ideas that are valid in a certain context. Different tools can facilitate learners in sharing or challenging the ideas in the knowledge construction process.

For Vygotsky, the most important for human mastery is creating and making use of "artificial" stimuli including the tools of the culture, language, the toys in the play, etc. (Vygotsky, 1978). The functions of tools such as culture, social interaction, discussion/dialogue, socialization, and technology in the knowledge construction process have been explored broadly. Deeply influenced by Friedrich Engels, Vygotsky stressed the role of labor and tools to transform the relations between human beings and their environment (John-Steiner & Souberman, 1978). Based on Engle's ideas, Vygotsky extended the concept of "mediation in human-environment interaction to the use of signs as well as tools" (Cole & Scribner, 1978, p.7). Vygotsky thought that "in the tradition of Marx and Engels, the mechanism of individual development change is rooted in society and culture" (Cole, & Scribner, p.7). He believed that "the internalization of a culturally produced sign system brings about behavioral transformations and forms the bridge between early and later forms of individual development" (Cole & Scribner, p.7).

Vygotsky stressed the roles of the signs and tools on human beings' development, especially on their higher psychological development. For example, he believed that the use of signs transforms humans' elementary processes based on biological origins gradually to higher psychological functions based on socio-cultural origins (Vygotsky, 1978), and "the links

between tool use and speech affects several psychological functions, in particular perception, sensory-motor operations, and attention, each of which is part of a dynamic system of behavior" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 31). For Vygotsky, higher mental functions are socially formed and culturally transmitted using signs and tools. The most important strategy for human mastery is to create and to use artificial stimuli including the tools of the culture, language, toys during play, and so forth.

Vygotsky's notion about tools such as technology, symbols, and languages has been widely applied in the literature of knowledge construction (for example, Enyedy, 2003; Farell & Holkner, 2002; Fisher, Bruhn, Graesel & Mandl, 1999). His notion about the roles of tools and signs in learning has inspired researchers to explore how knowledge is shared and created by people through different tools such as culture, media, technology, social networks, and communication. Here I will analyze several key tools employed in my study: culture, social networks and communication.

Culture. In Parsons and Shils's (1954) typology, culture is briefly grouped into three types: (a) culture as a symbol system or products such as film, music, and painting; (b) culture as a value system that affects people's actions and directs them to some ends, for instance, western culture and eastern culture; and (c) culture as an evaluation system, an orientation to action, or a way of life. For example, when we think about French culture, we might think of the refined French manner. Culture as a tool impacts action through these different cultural forms with different strategies.

Values as a form of culture shape people's actions. Farrer's (2002) empirical study on youth sex culture in Shanghai shows that Shanghai youth's sexual behaviors were the results of negotiations among the new market principles, traditional Chinese culture, and Shanghai's local

and historical heritage. Shanghai youth's tacit deconstruction of traditional sexual terms such as *respect*, *feelings*, and *love* indicates the potential influences of traditional Chinese values on Shanghai youth's sexual actions: they used the same terms with new meanings to pursue their needs under the new market reforms, but at the same time to avoid being conflicted with traditional conservative Chinese sexual values. Banks (1993) identified five types of knowledge: personal /cultural knowledge, popular knowledge, mainstream academic knowledge, and transformative academic knowledge, and school knowledge. He noticed that sometimes it is hard for students to accept mainstream academic knowledge and school knowledge when these types of knowledge conflict with their personal /cultural knowledge derived from their personal experiences in their homes, families, and community cultures. Banks suggested that "teachers can use student personal cultural knowledge as a vehicle to motivate students and as a foundation for teaching school knowledge" (P. 8). Aligning learners' general values and their personal cultural preferences could support learners' efficient construction of the new knowledge.

Instead of viewing culture as values that shape people's actions, Swidler (1986) suggested selecting some elements of culture tool kits (a set of tools) to construct action. She defined culture as symbolic vehicles of meaning, including "beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life" (p. 273). Instead of seeing culture as value that directs people's actions to certain ends, she assumed that culture influences people's actions as tool kits of symbols, stories, rituals, and worldviews. She noticed that even when people share the same values, their actions might be adapted to various structural barriers. For example, people who share the same values may act differently in different situations, in terms of their different skills, habits, styles, and access to resources. They may act toward some aims based on the suitability of their cultural

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equipment. Therefore, Swidler (1986) stated that culture does not push action in a same direction, rather, "it is more like a 'tool kit' or repertoire (Hannerz, 1969:186-88) from which actors select differing pieces for constructing lines of action"(p. 277). She suggested that cultural resources be integrated into different strategies of action.

Likewise, some scholars discussed how artistic culture products could be used as tools in knowledge construction. For example, based on communication theorists Fiske (1987) and DiMaggio's (1987) assessment, Lizardo (2006) stated that arts and popular culture play an important role in facilitating social interaction by way of serving as topics for conversation. Artistic expression such as poetry, drama, dance, literature, music, and visual art could be used as cultural tools to help learners "uncover hidden knowledge that cannot easily be expressed in words" (Lawrence, 2005, p.3). Learning takes place in the process of creating, planning, and reflecting on art.

Some researchers have examined how culture impacts action by investigating the relations between culture as a way of life and the degree to which this way of life could transfer to different types of the social networks. Based on Bourdieu's ([1986] 2001) classic statement on the forms of capital and the conversion dynamics among them and on DiMaggio's (1987) connection between cultural tastes and sociability, Lizardo (2006) conducted research to explore the relations between culture consumption (highbrow and popular) and network ties (strong and weak). His findings suggests that popular culture has a positive impact on weak-tie networks but not on strong-tie networks, whereas highbrow culture consumption selectively increases strong-tie density but has no significant effect on weak ties. Lizardo's (2006) investigation of the relations between cultural tastes and personal networks is beneficial for creating mechanisms that

transfer different types of cultural knowledge to different groups of people with different social positions in cultural structures such as fan clubs, reading groups, or internet hobby sites.

Swidler (1995) suggested that there are three sources through which culture could affect action: codes, contexts, and institutions. She argued that codes affect people's action with two strategies. One is to redefine the culture code to stress the relevant/external meaning of the code. That is, in certain contexts, what govern people's actions are not internalized beliefs, but "their knowledge of what meanings their actions have for others" (p. 33). Culture has influence on people's action when it shapes people's knowledge of "how others will interpret their actions" (Swidler, p. 39). The external or relevant meaning of the culture instead of the internal meaning of the culture determines people's actions in certain situations. For example, most of the time, people send a gift to their friends not because they believe in the internal value of the gift, but because of its external or relational value. That is, they care how others interpret the meaning of the gift. This is an example of how culture influences action "not so much by shaping beliefs as by shaping the external codes through which action is interpreted" (Swidler, 1995, p. 33). Redefining the cultural code to address its external or relevant meanings is a strategy to affect an action.

Another strategy to influence action through codes is to change a cultural code for a new purpose. Some social movements "reshape the world more effectively through redefining its terms rather than rearranging its sanctions" (Swidler, 1995, p. 34). To change the bad image of smart Shanghainese as selfish, cunning, and stingy, the Shanghai government initiated the campaign called" To be a lovable Shanghainese." The term changed from "smart" to "lovable" to address the new values and actions. "These cultural reworkings may sometimes change

people's values or give them new role models. But more important, such cultural reworkings change understandings of how behavior will be interpreted by others" (Swidler, 1995, p. 34).

Communication. Communication is an important tool to construct and transfer knowledge among learners. Communication includes nonverbal forms such as gestures, smiles, and frowns and verbal forms such as dialogue, talk, and speeches. In this review, I will focus on different types of dialogues and talk and their roles in the knowledge construction process.

Types of dialogue, discussion, and social interaction patterns influence how knowledge is socially constructed. Different types of dialogue have different functions in knowledge construction and require teachers and learners to have different roles. For example, inspired by Mercer's (1995, 1996) talk categories, Schwarz, Dreyfus and Hershkowits (2004) proposed five kinds of classroom dialogues: grounding dialogue, prospective dialogue, critical dialogue, reflective dialogue, and lesson delivery dialogue (see Table 2.1).

The dialogue types and the roles of students and teachers can be seen in Table 2.1. In grounding dialogue, the teacher presents a topic and participants are committed to share common knowledge. In prospective dialogue, the teacher clarifies the problem or the goals to be attained

Table 2.1. *Classroom Dialogue Types*

Dialogue type	Students' role	Teacher' role
grounding dialogue	share common knowledge	presents a topic
prospective dialogue	state an initial point of view	clarifies the problem or the goals to be attained
critical dialogue	counterchallenge , understand and accommodate divergent viewpoints	support argumentation and knowledge construction
reflective dialogue	to integrate and generalize accepted arguments, to draw lessons from experiences	helps students draw conclusions.
lesson delivery dialogue	to transmit the knowledge	presents a prepared lesson with the forms of lecture, reading textbooks, etc.

and the students are encouraged to state an initial point of view. In critical dialogue, participants are encouraged to challenge each other's views, understand and accommodate divergent viewpoints, and develop new ideas, and the teacher supports participants' argumentation and knowledge construction. In reflective dialogue, "The participants are committed to integrate and generalize accepted arguments. They recapitulate actions and draw lessons from their experiences" (Schwarz, Dreyfus & Hershkowits 2004, p. 170), and the teacher helps students draw conclusions. In lesson delivery dialogue, participants are supposed to transmit knowledge and the teacher presents a prepared lesson using lecture, reading the textbooks, and so forth. (Schwarz, Dreyfus & Hershkowits, 2004). Some types of dialogues could facilitate knowledge construction in some circumstances. For example, grounding dialogue and prospective dialogue are good for knowledge sharing, critical dialogue enables learners to challenge the ideas and clarify the complex puzzlements, and reflective dialogue allows accepted knowledge to be institutionalized. Usually, knowledge delivery is not the right dialogue type for knowledge construction.

Based on the theories of constructivism, Hammer and Collins (2002) reported how students in a graduate education seminar constructed and disseminated knowledge with different types of dialogues. According to the nature of the talk inspired by Mercer's (1995, 1996) talk categories and the symmetry of knowledge-based roles (whether the participants have equal roles in knowledge building), Arvaja and Hakkinen (2002) provided four patterns of interaction in the process of knowledge sharing and building: Joint critical knowledge building, tutoring, joint uncritical knowledge sharing, and leader dominance (see Table 2.2). A joint critical knowledge

building pattern suggests that all the participants' ideas are considered equally and that different

viewpoints are critically discussed and challenged. A tutoring pattern shows that participants

with more knowledge tutor participants with less knowledge and that participants distribute

descriptive information or knowledge rather than build critical knowledge. In a joint uncritical

Table 2.2. *The patterns of small group interaction*

Symmetry of knowledge-based roles	Nature of talk	
	Critical	Uncritical
Equal	Joint critical knowledge building	Joint uncritical knowledge sharing
Unequal	Tutoring	Leader dominance

Note. From" Social processes and knowledge building during small group interaction in a school science," by M.

Arvaja, and P. Hakkinen, 2002, *Scandinavian Journal of educational Research, 46* (2), p.165.

knowledge sharing pattern, participants equally share information or knowledge and avoid

disagreement. A leader dominance pattern means that the leaders make all the decisions during

discussion and the discussion is used to share one-sided uncritical knowledge. The findings in

Arvaja and Hakkinen's study indicate that educators should use different types of interactions

based on participants' different knowledge levels and different learning purposes. When the

learners lack the basic knowledge required, usually tutoring and leader dominance patterns are

suitable for the group to share the knowledge. When the group is to generate new and creative

ideas by incorporating different learners' perspectives, a tutoring pattern, especially the joint

critical knowledge building pattern, is the ideal interaction model. Overall, joint critical

knowledge building and joint uncritical knowledge sharing are two patterns that could promote

knowledge construction. In particular, the joint critical knowledge-building pattern enables

learners to generate creative ideas when they collectively construct knowledge.

Social networks. Based on the literature on social networks (see Balkundi & Harrison, 2006; Cook & Whitmeyer, 1992; Laumann, Galaskiewicz & Marsden, 1978), I define *social network* as "a social structure with ties and nodes." The individuals or organizations are called nodes, and the relationships such as friendship, membership, kinship, interest, profession, and so forth, that connect the individuals or organizations are called ties. There are other terms used to refer to social relationships that are similar to *social networks,* such as *social relationships, social support, social ties, and social activity* (House, Umberson & Landis,1988).

Social networks include both egocentric (or local) networks, which focus on the networks among individuals, and sociocentric (or global) networks, which stress networks among the members in a community or a group and their linkages to each other (Smith & Christakis, 2008). Social networks could be an indicator to determine whether the individuals or organizations within the networks interact well with one another (Cross, Parker, Prusak, & Borgatti, 2001).

Social network analysis (SNA) provides "a rich and systematic means of assessing informal networks by mapping and analyzing relationships among people, teams, departments or even entire organizations" (Cross, Parker, Prusak, & Borgatti, 2001 , p. 103) and could be used "to understand how a given network of people create and share knowledge"(Cross, Parker, Prusak, & Borgatti, 2001, p. 119). There are two ways to examine how social networks have an impact on individuals and organizations. One is to analyze the network mechanism to see how people mobilize the social resources for their own purposes in social networks (see Lin, 1982, 1990). In investigating the role of social networks in determining health, Smith and Christakis (2008) identified some mechanisms through which social networks affect health, including social support, social influence (e.g., norms, social control), access to resources, social involvement,

and person-to-person contacts. They concluded that illness, disability, and health behaviors were associated with others through social networks. Another way is to examine the structure of social networks to see how people access social resources through social networks (see Lin, 1982, 1990). This is an approach that most of the studies on social networks address. In this approach, scholars conduct research and analyze the shapes of social networks—closeness, radiality, density and centrality—and the positions of the individual's actions in a social network. The shapes of social networks and the positions of the individual actors in social networks determine the usefulness of the network to the individuals. For example, the networks that "have more and stronger connections with shorter paths among actors may be more robust and more able to respond quickly and effectively" (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005, p.65), and vice versa. The number and lengths of pathways in a network reflect individual actors' positions and therefore individual actors' constraints and opportunities in a social network. For example, the individual actors who have many pathways or have short pathways to other actors may have more opportunities to access the resources of the other actors (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005).

In recent years, social networks have been regarded as an effective way to attain, construct and transfer explicit knowledge among learners (Cross, Parker, Prusak, & Borgatti, 2001). Lizardo (2006) stated that most individuals "belong to or attend some sort of club or social organization. And we live in neighborhoods or communities" (p.781). Social networks are platforms through which knowledge is shared, constructed and transferred to the members within the community of the networks. People who have connections to other social worlds are likely to access a wider range of information and knowledge (Social network, Social network analysis section, para. 2). Cross, Parker, Prusak, and Borgatti (2001) analyzed knowledge creation from a human relationship perspective and introduced the concept of using social networks to facilitate

knowledge creation and sharing in organizations. They investigated how a research program helped managers promote knowledge creation, sharing and learning in the networks of employees. From their interviews, the authors were informed that in acquiring information and knowledge, four features of the relationships contributed to effective learning and improving knowledge creation and sharing among groups: (a) knowing other persons' expertise and when to turn to them; (b) being able to access that person; (c) the persons' willingness to engage in problem solving; and (d) safe relationship. Their study introduced the use of social networks to facilitate knowledge creation and sharing in organizations from four dimensions: knowledge, access, engagement, and safety.

<center>Mediating Systems in the Knowledge Construction Process</center>

Perspectives of knowledge based on different epistemological lens are different. Constructionists view knowledge as the social product "accepted for the time being by members of the discourse community but subject to revision or change" (Prawat & Floden, 1994, p. 44). That is, knowledge is the product of what learners agree on. Murphy (1997) suggested that constructionism values multiple interpretations and accepts the one that could explain the phenomenon and guide our actions in certain contexts. The criterion to judge whether this product is true or not is to see if it fits the local context at a particular point in time. Some scholars worried that some "true" or "valid" interpretations in certain contexts might be dismissed because of constructionists' believe that there are useful interpretations but no true or valid interpretations (Crotty, 1998; Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). This concern is especially significant when learners' ideas might be impacted by the socio-cultural context and micro learning environment in the knowledge construction process.

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In the knowledge construction process, learners' different perspectives will be filtered and woven by macro socio-cultural factors and the micro learning environment. These macro social cultural factors and the micro learning environment will influence which knowledge will be selected and institutionalized into publicly accepted knowledge. These topics will be discussed in this section along with a focus on the learning community. The micro learning environment in this study refers to the learning community.

Socio-Cultural Context

Bandura's (1977) social learning theory indicates that learners adjust their behaviors through negotiating and mediating their needs, behaviors, attitudes and expectations from society. People view the world through the lens influenced by their culture, which leads them to select some thing and to ignore others (Crotty, 1998).

Researchers realized that human thought and behavior can be influenced by direct experience and observation. Instead of using the traditional theories to understand "how behavior is learnt and modified by direct experience" (Bandura, 1977, p vi), Bandura emphasized learning the behaviors and attitudes accepted by society through observing or imitating the modeling instead of learning from direct experiences. Through observing, imitating and modeling others' behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors, people get ideas about which responses are most appropriate in which settings, and how new behaviors are formed (Bandura, 1977).

The processes of observational learning include four components. The first of these is attention: people need to attend to the significant features of the modeled behavior in order to learn from observation. The second is retention: people need to remember what they observe. This requires the observed information to be coded into long-term memory. Bandura (1977) provides two main representational systems to code the information: imaginable and verbal. In

these two systems, information could be transmitted to observers through physical

demonstration, pictorial representation, verbal description, or though varied symbolic modeling

provided by mass media such as TV and films. The third component of observation is motor

reproduction: it is a process of "converting symbolic representations into appropriate actions"

(Bandura, 1977, p. 27). In this operational process, observers organize their responses in

accordance with the modeled patterns and adjust the learned behavior based on their own needs.

The fourth is motivation or reinforcements: people only adopt modeled behaviors that they value

or that have effective and positive consequences. In this process, "the observer expects to receive

positive reinforcements for the modeled behavior" (Isom, 1998, Biographical Information

Section, ¶ 10).

Reinforcement plays an important role in observational learning. Reinforcements in

social learning include external, vicarious, and self-generated reinforcements. Observers will

learn efficiently if they are informed in advance about the benefits they can get from adopting the

modeled behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) also suggests four strategies that encourage

observers to learn new behavior: performance accomplishments (people's own personal

successful experiences), vicarious experiences (other people's rewarded or published

performance), verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal.

Bandura's social learning theory is especially useful for guiding people to quickly learn

the behaviors and attitudes that society values and accepts. It indicates that knowledge

construction is shaped by socio-culture contexts. In the knowledge construction process, usually

learners learn new knowledge, skills, and attitudes that society values most. They adjust their

behaviors through negotiating and mediating their needs and the expectations from society; they

mediate the relationship between their behaviors and attitudes and the expectations from society.

Socio-cultural factors and the social reinforcement system will shape learners' behaviors and their attitudes.

Learning Environment

Prawat and Floden (1994) regarded the knowledge construction process as a process of meaning negotiation. The term *negotiation* has two connotations: the first is to make compromise and consensus in order to achieve an agreement; the second is to clarify the agreement and disagreement in order to solve the problems and obstacles. That is, in the knowledge construction process, there are two points that need to be addressed: one is to share the different ideas, make compromise, and achieve the consensus; another is to challenge the conflicting ideas and select the ideas that are valid in certain contexts. Knowledge construction emphasizes discussion, collaboration, negotiation, and shared meanings (Ernest, 1995), which requires a de-powered learning environment. The learning community, which is synonymous with a learning context/environment in this study, attempts to create a de-powered learning environment for learners to express their ideas freely, respect the different voices, and value the mutual engagements in the learning activities (Bersch & Lund, 2002; Janov, 1995; Lawrence, 2002; Lieberman, 2000; Martiny, 1998; Moore & Brooks, 2000; Pereles, Lockyer & Fidler, 2002). It is more effective for knowledge to be inspired, shared and created among learners as compared to the traditional instructor-centered knowledge-transmission learning environment.

The learning community is a controversial concept in terms of its boundaries. I will define the boundaries of a learning community in this study and discuss how it will influence knowledge construction by reviewing the definitions of community, learning community, and its characteristics.

Definition of Community

 Community has multiple meanings and various definitions. Galbraith (1990) provided a

thorough summary of the definitions of community. He stated that a community could be

depicted by its horizontal and vertical patterns in terms of the geographic community. A vertical

community is "a large-scale systematic community that is connected by cultural, social,

psychological, economic, political, environmental, and technological elements" (p. 3). A

horizontal community is connected by the relationship of local units to each other. Warren (1978,

as cited in Galbraith, 1990) analyzed 94 definitions of community and concluded that 69

definitions regard community as a social unit with the components of social interaction, common

ties, and locational criteria.

 Other scholars think that community is not just a geographic concept. For example,

Brookfield (1983, as cited in Galbraith, 1990) stated that communities could be an organization

where a group of people are connected by some single common interest or set of common

interests. Galbraith (1990) suggested that a community is "the combination of geographic,

locational, and nonlocational units, system, and characteristics that provide relevance and growth

to individuals, groups, and organizations" (p. 5). Calderwood (2000) considered community to

be based on kinship and commitment; people in communities talk together and construct shared

meanings. Calderwood (2000) summarized several different types of communities: functional

communities that are connected by the major life roles, imagined communities that transcend

immediate geographical proximity with the development of technological innovations

(Anderson, 1991, as cited in Calderwood, 2000), and communities of memory which are

embodied in individuals who learn who they are as they continue to create their own identities as

a community (Bellah et al., 1985, as cited in Calderwood, 2000). The boundaries of communities are open and fluid.

From the above analysis, we know a community is a combination of geographic, locational, and nonlocational units based on kinship and commitment. From the geographical perspective, a macro-level community is connected to the social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental elements and is similar to the concept of society. A micro-level community is connected to the local units such as a residential community. A non-geographical community is a community where people are connected to each other by their mutual interest or mutual benefits, past and future life experiences (communities of memory), or by virtual technology (the imagined communities). Most communities include features such as social interaction, common ties, locational criteria, meaning construction, and boundary clarification with a process of inclusion and exclusion. In defining *learning community*, I will mainly focus on the micro-level geographical community and the non-geographical interest community.

Definitions of Learning Community

Given that there are various definitions of a community, there are also various definitions of a learning community. Kilpatrick, Barrett and Jones (2003) made a comprehensive review of the definitions of a learning community. They assumed that the broadest definition of *learning community* is a group of people or institutions that promote systematic societal change and share or own the responsibilities, resources and rewards, etc., together (Himmelmann, 1994, as cited in Kilpatrick, Barrett & Jones, 2003). The learning community in this definition is a mixture of geographical and non-geographical elements. The function of the learning here is to promote social change.

In Australian literature, *learning community* also refers to combining the geographical and non-geographical learning community together. For example, in Australia, it is assumed that:

> Learning communities are developed where groups of people, linked geographically or by shared interest, collaborate and work in partnership to address their members' learning needs. Learning communities facilitated through adult and community education are a powerful tool for social cohesion, community capacity building and social, cultural and economic development. (Department of Education, 2003, p. 12)

This definition assumes that a learning community refers to a group of people who are linked together by geography or by shared interest. The function of such learning communities is to promote social cohesion, and social, cultural, and economic development. Another example of defining a learning community as a combination of geographic perspective and shared interest in Australia is provided by Kilpatrick, Barrett and Jones (2003), who argued that in Australian literature, the definitions of learning communities tend to "define learning communities as applying to communities of common interest as well as geography"(p. 2).

Yarnit's (2000) definition includes the macro and micro geographical learning community and stresses that learning incorporates the forces of social and institutional relationships in local communities. Yarnit (2000) defines learning community in the following way:

> A learning community addresses the learning needs of its locality through partnership. It uses the strengths of social and institutional relationships to bring about cultural shifts in perceptions of the value of learning. Learning communities explicitly use learning as a way of promoting social cohesion, regeneration and economic development which involves all parts of the community. (p. 11)

According to the types of community, this is a geographical learning community that combines the forces of macro social and micro-institutional relationships in learning. This definition highlights the function of the learning in promoting culture shift and social and economic development in local communities.

Henderson, Castles, and Brown's (2000) definition of a learning community emphasizes the role of learning in expanding the lifelong learning ideas in social units such as cities, towns, and communities. They (2000) claim that the term learning community "is used to describe a learning city, town, or a community regardless of its size or location" (p. 5). They stated that this concept originated in the 1970s. Later, in 1992, the OECD conference in Gothenburg recommended stressing cities as a means of extending lifelong learning. This recommendation was accepted by some European countries, by Australian, and by Asian countries such as China and Japan to promote lifelong learning in local communities throughout the nation. For example, they noticed that in the UK, "a Learning Community is described as one where industry, education, business and individuals work together to address the learning needs of the whole community and to promote the principles of lifelong learning" (pp. 3-4). Kilpatrick, Barrett and Jones (2003) state that in Europe, learning communities emphasize learning towns, learning cities and learning regions and "tend to identify geographical location as a binding element in learning communities" (p. 2). Building networks and cooperation among industry, education, business, and individuals is an important strategy for communities to create a convenient and democratic learning environment. The concept of the learning community is derived from the lifelong learning mobilization movement and is a micro-geographical learning community.

Zhu and Baylen (2005) argued that the term learning community has been used to refer to a number of approaches, models, and learning environments. For example, Wenger (1998)

regarded a community of practice as a unit where people engage in social practice to learn and to become who they are, focusing on shared enterprises over time. From the definition of community, we know this is an interest community where people with similar interests meet together to share their practical knowledge and resources, indicating that a community of practice is a type of interest-oriented non-geographical learning community and is one model or approach to a learning community.

From the above discussions, I think the definition of a learning community can be understood from three perspectives: First, from the non-geographical perspective, a learning community refers to a network where a group of people who have similar interests meet together to share their practical or professional experiences. The function of a non-geographical community is to enlarge the resources, the knowledge, and the relationship networks among people. Learners themselves play an important role in this social interaction activity. A community of practice belongs to this type. Second, from the geographical perspective, a learning community mainly refers to an administrative place where industry, education, business, and government work together and integrate their resources to create an equal and convenient lifelong learning environment for everyone. The function of these geographical learning communities is to promote the local economic and cultural development, and to enhance social cohesion. The government plays an important role in this lifelong learning movement. Learning communities situated in towns, districts and streets belong to this type. Third, some researchers suggest that a learning community can be a mixture of geographical and non-geographical learning community, or a mixture of macro-social geographical community and micro-community or institution-based geographical community.

Characteristics of the Learning Community

A geographical learning community and a non-geographical community of practice have some similar and different characteristics, which will be discussed below.

Similarities. Different from the traditional education model, a learning community emphasizes the learners' active role in learning activities: learners are connected together by common interests or goals, they collaboratively exchange their experiences and ideas and construct new knowledge together, and that knowledge is situated in people's daily lives and is closely connected with learners' practice. A learning community also stresses learning situated in authentic environments with less hierarchic power. All of these characteristics will be analyzed below.

In a learning community, learners construct knowledge together. Kilpatrick, Barrett, and Jones (2003) believe that the common characteristics of the learning community include: a common purpose as well as interest or geography among the members, collaboration and partnership in learning, and respect for diversity in the learning process. Sharing knowledge through collaboration is essential in learning communities. "Knowledge is commonly socially constructed, through collaborative efforts toward shared objectives or by dialogues and challenges brought about by difference in persons' perspectives" (Pea, 1993, p. 48, as cited in Kilpatrick, Barrett, & Jones, 2003, p. 8). Learning communities should facilitate knowledge sharing among learners with different strategies and tools (Kilpatrick, Barrett, & Jones, 2003). For example, Marsick, Bitterman and van der Veen (2000) recommend educators work with individuals collaboratively with different strategies on different levels: on the level of the social unit, a key function is to create an open and safe learning climate to ensure learners can speak and engage in dialogue freely and critically; on the level of the individual participants, adult

educators can support learners in their pursuit of "self-awareness, self-assessment, and self-realization through mentoring, advising, and enhancing experiential learning" (p. 59). To participate in a community, individuals should develop critical reflection, collaboration, critical assessment of information and communicative competencies (Marsick, Bitterman & van der Veen, 2000).

A safe and democratic learning environment is necessary for sufficient knowledge construction. Based on the experience of a cohort learning group, Lawrence (1997) summarizes three stages learners undergo to express their ideas openly: the first is the isolation stage-- learners are reluctant to express their strong views; the second is the exploratory stage-- learners would like to spend time getting to know each other and begin to develop a sense of how they work together as a group; the third is the bonding stage-- the group "begins to see itself as part of an interdependent community of learners" (Lawrence, 1997, p. 121). To facilitate learners' movement from the isolation stage to the bonding stage, it is necessary to nurture a safe and open learning environment. In this environment, learners' diversity and experiences are respected and valued, and group identity and mutual commitment are developed gradually (Lawrence, 1997). Other practical experiences also indicate that a learning community should create a de-powered learning environment that is safe enough for learners to express their ideas freely, respect the different voices, and value the mutual engagements in the learning activities (Bersch & Lund, 2002; Janov, 1995; Lawrence, 2002; Lieberman, 2000; Martiny, 1998; Moore & Brooks, 2000; Pereles, Lockyer & Fidler, 2002).

 In a learning community, learning not only happens in a formal education setting, but it is also situated in the social and cultural context where learners live and has close connections with learners' daily lives, their work, and local community issues (Moore & Brooks, 2000; Stein &

Imel, 2002; Wenger,1998; Zhu & Baylen, 2005). Stein and Imel (2002) argue that one of the key characteristics of the learning community is that learning is situated in the local community and relates closely to the community's daily life. For Wenger (1998), individuals' engagement in actions and interactions is embedded in the culture, history and the real life of the local community; a community of practice should target the situated experience, interpersonal events, and social practice in the learning process. Moore and Brooks (2000) gives a case example of how learners in learning communities in several counties along the Savannah River (USREC) focus on the local community problems and take action to solve them collectively: the group members generate the problems or the issues they are most concerned about in the communities. Through dialogue or discussions, they decide together the strategies and the actions they will take to solve these problems or issues. Wenger (1998) also described how people in the workplace learn from each other through solving the problems in the workplace. All of these learning activities, no matter whether they are in geographical or non-geographical learning communities, are situated in practice and have close connections to learners' lives and careers.

In summary, geographical and non-geographical learning communities have the following similar characteristics: learners construct knowledge together, and learning is situated in real life and has connections with learners' lives and work or with the community's issues. An equal and safe learning environment is necessary.

Differences. In a community of practice, people having similar goals or interests share their experience, construct new knowledge, and take actions to solve the problems they encounter. In this learning process, people get a sense of belonging to this community, and gradually develop a sense of identify within the community (Wenger, 1998). Wenger and Snyder (2000) clarified the structure of community of practice by pointing out that a community of

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practice could be composed of people in one organization; it could also be composed of people within groups of organizations. Different from other organizational structures such as teams created by managers in order to complete specific projects, communities of practice are formed and organized by the participants themselves. The participants in these communities of practice learn together by focusing on problems that are directly related to their work.

Geographical learning communities are one part of the architecture of building a learning society, which can be achieved through different social units such as cities, towns, and communities. According to the Faure Report (Faure et al., 1972), the architecture of a lifelong learning system is composed of vertical integration, horizontal integration, and democratization of educational systems. "A vertically and horizontally integrated, and democratized, system of education would result in a learning society" (Boshier & Huang, 2006, p.362). The vertical dimension means education should occur throughout an individual's whole life. Horizontal integration means education should penetrate into informal, non-formal, as well as formal settings (Boshier & Huang, 2006). A learning society could be achieved through different social units such as cities, communities, and organizations, which are called learning cities, learning communities and learning organizations. A learning community is composed of learning districts, learning streets and learning families, which create an equal learning environment for everyone in his/her lifetime. Building a learning community is a process of integrating the resources from districts, streets and families in local administrative communities and incorporating the efforts from government, business and education institutions (Ye, 2005). Assumptions about lifelong learning provide a structural and theory framework for developing geographical learning communities.

Henderson, Castles and Brown (2000) believe that to become a (geographical) learning community, it is important to build effective community partnerships; to strengthen the links between existing formal, non-formal or informal educational providers; to provide learner-centered facilities; and to offer more effective information, advice and guidance services for learners. The practical experience from the Albury/Wodonga area in Australia indicates that in a geographical learning community, to create a convenient learning environment, it is important to build the linkages between all the providers of education, from pre-school through primary and secondary schools, universities, colleges, and adult education centers (Henderson, Castles & Brown, 2000).

In summary, a community of practice is a network composed of people who share similar interests and goals from organizations; the learners themselves play an important role in organizing their learning activities and sharing their knowledge and experiences related to their work. The geographical learning community is regarded as one part of the lifelong learning system; it integrates a variety of learning resources from different organizations and institutions in the local community into the learning process. Governments play an important role in promoting and creating a lifelong learning environment in the local community.

Boundaries of Learning Community and Communities of Practice

Based on the idea that knowledge is contextual and constructed, social constructionists challenged the traditional knowledge transmission model where teachers are regarded as the knowledge authorities and students as the knowledge containers and criticized it for not considering the social cultural context of the knowledge and the experiences of the learners (Buffington, 2003).

By tracing back to the concept of the community, I found that the learning community developed several approaches: geographical micro-level community based learning community and macro-level society-based learning community; non-geographical learning community such as an interest-oriented community of practice; and the combinations of geographical and non-geographical learning community.

Geographical learning community and community of practice were developed as new contexts for learning activities that promote knowledge construction: they both create a de-powered learning environment for learners to express their ideas freely, respect the different voices, and value mutual engagements in learning activities (Bersch & Lund, 2002; Janov, 1995; Lawrence, 2002; Lieberman, 2000; Martiny, 1998; Moore & Brooks, 2000; Pereles, Lockyer & Fidler, 2002).

The boundaries of the geographical and non-geographical learning community intersect. Both a geographical learning community and a non-geographical community of practice emphasize a safe and democratic learning environment; both believe knowledge is constructed by learners and learning is situated in the social-cultural context; and both have close connections to learners' lives and careers or with the communities' issues. However, a geographical learning community is composed of different social units such as districts, streets, and families. It emphasizes learners' social interaction and collaboration in learning among group members. It addresses the function of learning in solving community problems and issues and promoting community development and social cohesion and is usually supported by various levels of government. Initiating a geographical learning community is a process of initiating a learning movement that integrates the resources from districts, streets, and families in a local administrative community and incorporates the efforts from government, business and education

institutions to create an equal lifelong learning environment. A non-geographical community of practice is composed of learners having common goals, sharing their experiences from practice, constructing new knowledge, and taking action to solve problems in practice. It is organized by the learners within organizations or from different organizations based on their own learning interests and learning needs.

However, Kilpatrick, Barrett and Jones (2003) and the Australian Department of Education (2003) suggest that the boundaries of the geographical learning community and the community of practice overlapped. Some practical experiences also indicate that in the development of the geographical learning community, besides integrating learning resources among different social units and mobilizing learning activity in a local community's social and cultural context, it is necessary to nurture the communities of practices in a geographical learning community context in order to promote the variety of the social learning activities and to address social interactions among local people (L. Jiang, personal communication, July 30, 2007).

Learning Communities in China

In China, research on the learning community was beginning to flourish by 2000 when policies about building up a learning society and learning community appeared. After searching the topic of the learning community in the Chinese Journal Network Database from 1994 to 2005, Shao and Wang (2005) noticed that from 1995-1999, there had been no articles about learning communities. From the 2000s, policies appeared about building up a learning society and learning community, and then during the period of 2000-2001, there were 17 articles on learning communities. From 2002 to 2005, there were 85. Searches for literature on the learning community from 1989-2006 in the VIP and Wangfang databases, two of the largest

journal/theses databases in China, show that in recent years, the following orientations characterize the literature on Chinese learning communities:

1. The definitions (Ye, 2000, Hu, 2002; Huang, 2000; Huang, 2004; Wang, 2002). Based on the learning community literature published from 1994-2005 in China, Shao and Wang (2005) summarized that there are four types of definitions of a learning community. The first type is to define the learning community as a process of guiding the residents to be involved in community learning activities, culture and entertainment activities, and community management activities; the second type regards a learning community as the extension of the assumptions of the learning organization into the community context; the third is to define a learning community based on its function. For example, Ye (2000) defined a learning community as one that can satisfy residents' basic rights and their lifelong learning needs, can improve the residents' intellectual quality and their life quality, and can promote the community's continuous development; the fourth is to define the learning community based on its structure. For example, Huang (2000) regarded the learning community as a social unit situated in the local regions where the lifelong learning activities are conducted to promote community development and residents' quality of life.

2. The functions of the learning community, including culture education, moral education, economic-technical education, literacy education, leisure education, and urbanization education (Chen, 2004; Hu, 2003; Huang, 2004; Wang, 2003).

3. The relations between learning community and other areas such as urban development, community party development, library and informational resource development (China Monthly Report 2002; Lv, 2004; Wang, 2003).

4. Sources for the theoretical bases of learning community, such as: Jiang Zemin's five suggestions and ideas about building a learning society at the Asia Pacific Economic

Cooperation organization meeting in 2002, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* by Peter Senge in 1992, *The Learning Society* by Robert Maynard Hutchins in 1968, and *Learning to Be: The World of Education Today and Tomorrow* by Edgar Faure et al. in 1972 (Shao & Wang, 2005).

5. The models of building a learning community, such as: the leadership model, where the learning activities are supported by governments, organizations and communities; the community education and training model, where learning activities are organized by community college, streets, towns, community education centers and civic education schools ; and the community educational resource integration model, where all the learning resources in the community should be open to the citizens (Shao & Wang, 2005). After a quantitative survey about how S Town constructed a learning community, Fan (2003) recommended a demand–oriented learning community model, including integrating environment management and protection into local residents' lives, promoting community development, and emphasizing the local residents' needs.

6. The strategies for building a learning community (Fan, 2003; Hu, 2002; Qiu, 2004; Wang, 2004; Wu, 2005; Wu, Wang & Wu , 2005; Yang & Huang, 2006 ; Zhai, 2004; Zhang; 2004). Resource integration, leadership support and learning community system development were regarded as the essential strategies for building a learning community in China. For example, Qiu (2004) indicated that resource integration would provide a new angle for building a learning community. In the process of Chinese learning community development, Wu, Wang, and Wu (2005) recommended publicizing the information and knowledge in a learning community, developing the learning support system, utilizing the different learning resources efficiently, and using E-learning for personalized learning activities.

7. The characteristics of Chinese learning communities. For example, Han and Wang (2006) summarized four characteristics: First, the governments lead the learning community development by forming the learning community leadership team and integrating different organizations' learning resources. Second, learning community development is connected with community environment protection, community culture development, and other local community issues. Third, learning communities organize rich learning content, such as new knowledge, skills, entertainment, health, ethnics, and home management. Last, learning communities pay more attention to activities-oriented learning, engaging in activities such as learning achievement exhibitions, reading seminars, learning festivals, speech contests, learning exchange seminars and calls for articles and essays

8. The suggestions for learning community development. Han and Wang (2006) suggested extending the meaning of learning: They suggested in a learning community, people should learn from everyone, everywhere; they should strengthen the communications through group learning; and they should use systematic thinking and action learning to deal with community issues. Zhu (2005) recommended two keys to building a learning community. First, he thought that the learning organization should be the basic unit of the learning community and the learning community should organize the learning activities in different learning organizations; second, he recommended that culture should be the spirit of the learning community that connects community development issues together. He suggested absorbing the special cultural repertoire based on the local community's practical, historical and cultural heritages; spreading the local community culture through government and organization publications, and media advertisements; and finally, translating the community values into residents' good behaviors and actions.

Searching the titles of the articles on the learning community from 1989 to early 2006 in Wanfang and VIP databases, I found most of the articles on the learning community focused on macro-level topics such as functions of the learning community, leadership and organizational system, resource incorporation and sharing. Most of the authors suggested that the key to building a learning community is to nurture a good learning atmosphere and to develop the learning system and organizational mechanism from the top-level. Researchers intensively discussed how to build a learning community based on the roles and the functions of the agency and the system, and the importance of integrating the local community issues and resources into learning activities. To date, no studies have been found regarding how learners learn in the learning community and how to initiate learning activities to promote knowledge construction in the learning community context.

Chapter Summary

Responding to the critique of the traditional knowledge transmission model for not considering the social and cultural context of the knowledge and the experiences of the learners, knowledge construction models were developed that assume that knowledge is situated in a social and cultural context and is constructed by learners collaboratively in context. Constructionism developed several approaches, such as radical, social, physical, evolutionary, postmodern constructivism, social constructionism, and information-processing constructivism. In this study, the idea of knowledge construction is derived from social constructionism.

Based on the assumption of how reality is constructed, Berger and Luckmann(1967) explored the process of knowledge construction: how the knowledge is shared, selected, typified, and institutionalized into explicit knowledge. In this process, different tools facilitate the construct of the new knowledge. Vygotsky's theory about the roles of tools and signs in learning

has been widely applied in the literature of knowledge construction and inspired researchers to explore how knowledge is shared and created by people through different tools. In this chapter, I especially addressed these tools such as culture, communication, and social network.

In the knowledge construction process, culture as tool can affect actions and behaviors mainly through three forms of culture: (a) culture as a product; (b) culture as a value system; and (c) culture as a way of life. Swidler (1995) also examined how culture could affect action through redefining the cultural code to address its external or relevant meanings and modifying a cultural code for a new purpose.

Communication tools such as the types of dialogue and the patterns of social interaction influence knowledge construction. In recent years, social networks have been regarded as an effective way to share, construct, and transfer knowledge among learners. People having broad connections to other social worlds can access a wider range of information and knowledge.

In the knowledge construction process, macro socio-cultural factors and the micro learning environment will shape learners' different perspectives. With regard to the influence of socio-cultural factors, Bandura's social learning theory indicates that people learn the knowledge, behaviors and attitudes that society values and accepts by observing or imitating the modeling, and adjusting their behaviors through negotiating and mediating their needs and the societal expectations. In terms of the influence of the learning environment, the learning community creates an empowered learning environment for learners to negotiate the meanings in the knowledge construction process and is an ideal learning environment that facilitates the negotiation of meaning.

Based on the concept of the community and the literature of the learning community, the learning community can be typified in several ways: geographical micro-level community-based

learning community and macro-level society-based learning community, non-geographical

learning community such as an interest-oriented community of practice; and the combinations of

geographical and non-geographical learning community. Geographical learning community and

community of practice, two types of learning community being extensively discussed in the

literature, create a de-powered learning environment for promoting knowledge construction.

A geographical learning community is supported by government, business, and education

institutions; it stresses events, activities, and community issues in learning; and it integrates the

resources from the different social units such as government, schools, and organizations and

organizes the learning activities in the social units such as districts, streets, and families and

other organizations within a local administrative community. The functions of geographical

learning communities are to solve community problems and issues and to promote community

development and social cohesion.

Literature on Chinese learning communities extensively discussed the functions of the

learning community, leadership and organizational system, resource incorporation and sharing.

However, the literature is missing an emphasis on how to initiate the learning activities to

promote knowledge construction in the context of the learning community.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Learning communities are being supported by the Chinese government as one important strategy to build a harmonious learning society and to address the social problems under the economic reform. Influenced by globalization, practitioners realized that learners instead of instructors should be placed at the forefront in order to recruit more citizens to participate in the learning community programs. That is, learners should actively construct knowledge instead of passively accepting knowledge from instructors. However, in practice, little is known about how learners construct knowledge in a geographical learning community that is supported by a highly structured and power–centralized government. Studies of knowledge construction and the learning community give little attention to this issue, especially the patterns of how knowledge is shared, selected, and institutionalized in the learning community context. The purpose of the study was to understand how knowledge was socially constructed in a geographical learning community in China. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are the patterns of knowledge construction in the learning community?

2. What are the social-cultural factors that shape knowledge construction in the learning community?

3. What are the learning community factors that shape knowledge construction in the learning community?

4. How do social-cultural and learning community factors together shape knowledge construction?

This chapter describes the research methods in pursuing the aim of the study. The chapter is organized in these sections: design of the study, sample selection, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability, researcher bias and assumptions,

Research Design

My research purpose was to explore how knowledge was socially constructed in the context of a geographical learning community. Qualitative embedded case study was employed to investigate this question by examining a case— a geographical learning community in the Shanghai Zhabei district.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is to understand, explain, or explore the meaning of a social phenomenon in a natural setting. Instead of viewing the meaning as objective, the epistemological bases of the qualitative research are constructionism, which believes that meaning is created from the interaction between subject and object, and subjectivism, which believes that meaning "is imposed on the object by the subject" (Crotty, 1998). Qualitative researchers are interested in exploring how meaning is created through the interaction between the subject and object and in understanding how meaning is interpreted by the subject.

Drawing on Fish's (1990) idea that meaning is social and conventional, Crotty (1998) suggested that we could only access meaning by inhabiting the meaning or by being inhabited by the meaning, indicating the researchers' need to be immersed in natural settings to access the meaning created in the real life.

Merriam (2009) argued that in order to observe the behaviors and to understand the meaning in natural settings, researchers go to the field and collect the thick and rich data through different resources such as interview, observation and document. Qualitative researchers should remain "sensitive to the data by being able to record events and detect happenings without first

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having them filtered through and squared with the pre-existing hypotheses and bias" (Glaser, 1978, p.3). Instead of relying on some pre-determined instruments, Merriam (2009) stated that in qualitative research, the researchers themselves are "the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (p.15). They can adapt the data collection and analysis strategies to certain context and circumstances.

The epistemological bases of qualitative research determines that theory/concept/meaning is generated from the data collected from real life using inductive analysis reasoning. Regarding the data analysis process, Merriam (2009) stated that qualitative researchers build abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories using the inductive reasoning process rather than deductively testing existing theory.

Case Study

An embedded case study was selected as the best method to address my research problem. Case study is one of several research designs. Merriam (2009) suggests that case study can be defined in terms of the process of doing case study research, the unit of analysis (the case), or the end product of a case. For example, Patton (2002) regards the purpose of case study as the collection of in-depth, comprehensive and systematic information about the case. This whole data collection and analysis process results in a product: case study. For Stake (2006), a case study is "both a process of inquiry about the case and the product of that inquiry" (p.8).

To understand case study, it is important to know the nature of the case. Stake (2006) states that a case should be specific— "A case is a noun, a thing, an entity; it is seldom a verb, a participle, a functioning" (p. 1). However, a case study could examine the function or principle or action of a phenomenon by investigating a specific case.

The case should have boundaries. A case is an integrated system with its bounded working parts. Stake (2006) observes that the case has its own context, special experience and boundaries; within these boundaries, it has subsections, groups, occasions, dimensions, domains and different objects. Each of the sub-units in the boundaries of a case may have its own context. Case study explores the experiences within the boundaries of a case or within its sub-units. Merriam (2009) states that the unit of analysis "characterizes a case study" (p.41). In a qualitative research, if the unit of analysis has no boundaries, then it is not a case study.

Case study is a process of inquiry about a specific and special case or cases in particular settings or in certain kinds of events or practice to explore the complex human experience (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). In this process, researchers select a case, collect and analyze data, and report the results. Unlike quantitative studies using large samples to examine a phenomenon widely, case study methods investigate single or multiple cases to examine a phenomenon deeply and thoroughly within its real-life context (Orum, Feagin, & Sjoberg, 1991; Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2006).

Case study is especially useful under some conditions. Scholz and Tietje (2002) write that case study — especially an embedded case study that studies a case and its subunits, is appropriate to deal with the actual, complex, and current problems in the real world. Many case studies aim to improve action and bring about better decision making. Merriam (2009) observes that, usually, a case study is selected for uniqueness. For instance, a case study can focus on a particular situation, event, or program which may reveals us knowledge from a unique angle. Yin (2006) states that one advantage of case study is that because it examines a case within its real context in-depth, it is especially suitable for addressing "descriptive or explanatory questions and aims to produce a firsthand understanding of people and events"(p. 5).

Different types of case studies have different functions. For example, Stake (2005) identifies three types of case study and their different purposes: intrinsic case studies, in which researchers have an interest in the case itself; instrumental case study, where the case is a tool to help researchers to understand something beyond the case; and multiple case study or collective case study, where several cases are selected to "investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition" (p. 445). A multiple case study is an "instrumental case study extended to several cases" (Stake, 2005, pp. 445-446). Embedded case studies refer to studying mini-cases such as subsections, occasions, dimensions and domains within a single case. By examining the different salient aspects of the mini-cases, researchers can get a comprehensive idea of a social phenomenon (Scholz & Tietje, 2002; Stake, 2005).

The above discussions indicate that from the methodological perspective, case study is mainly a process of investigating a specific case (or cases) in a certain context to explore the complex human experience or social phenomenon. Researchers use case study because it can efficiently address real, complex and specific problems or issues that occur in the real world.

<div align="center">Sample Selection</div>

To design a case study, the first thing the researchers need to do is to identify the case (Dyson & Genishi, 2005; Yin, 2006) and then to decide how to select participants within the case.

Case and Sub-cases Selection

Based on Stake's (2005) identification, I decided to use one special type of multiple case study: the embedded case study. That is, I focused on one particular case— the Zhaibei Learning Community— and examined the sub-units of this case including one town and eight streets (the administrative divisions, similar to wards) where learning activities happen. The Zhabei

Learning Community integrates local learning resources together in its subunits to create a convenient and equal learning environment for its citizens. Learning activities happen in these different sub-units. To understand how knowledge is socially constructed among people in a learning community, it is necessary to examine learners' learning activities in the sub-units of the learning community and to investigate the different learning strategies these sub-units provide to their participants.

To generalize the findings to similar situations, case selection is very important. Exemplary cases provide rich information. By intensively investigating the exemplary case that is "unusual and of general public interest" (Yin, 2008, p.185) and that has the significant features that can improve understanding of general cases, case study can provide exemplary evidence for understanding complex phenomena efficiently and effectively. I selected the Shanghai Zhabei District Learning Community (SZDLC) with its subunits as an exemplary case in my study for the following reasons:

1. The SZDLC is located in Shanghai, the largest business and financial center in China. Compared to other national learning communities in other provinces, the SZDLC has rich resources and convenient communication opportunities with other countries.

2. The Zhabei District is one of the 18 districts in Shanghai and is one of the three earliest that were nominated as national learning community pilots in 2001. It has representative features that other learning communities also have. It leads the national learning community forum every year to exchange practical experiences (Y. M. Li, personal communication, July 27, 2007). After years of development, this community has accumulated some valuable experiences about how to build a learning community, which could be transmitted to other learning communities as a model.

3. I lived in Shanghai for many years, and I am familiar with the environment, the customs and culture there. It is convenient for me to explore the learning community there. My short working experience in the Zhabei District Government gave me a good opportunity to make connections with some key leaders from the district government, the Zhabei District Education Bureau and the Shanghai Education Committee who are responsible for learning community management, mobilization and policy making.

Since the case has boundaries, it is necessary to know the context and the structure of the case selected. I did the embedded paradigmatic case study targeting the SZDLC. The Zhabei District has 29 square kilometers, eight streets (the administrative divisions, similar to wards), one town, a population of 815,000 residents, and 106,000 migrants; it has one community college, nine community schools, 71 community extension schools, and about 300 learning centers. Learning activities occur in families, among neighbors, in the resident apartments, in the workplaces, in the learning centers, in the community universities and schools, and among the different clubs and salons organized by the local people ("*Brief introduction of the Zhabei community education,*" n. d.). Based on the theories of learning community and knowledge construction, I selected the embedded sites in these sub-units having at least one of the following criteria: (a) The sites provided programs that were learner-centered rather than instructor-oriented. That is, they incorporated learners' experiences and collaborations in the learning process; (b) the sites addressed local community problems or issues in learning activities; and (c) the sites employed social, cultural, and historical resources as learning tools to construct new knowledge.

Based on these criteria, I selected nine learning cells from six streets in the northern, middle, and southern parts of the Zhabei District as the embedded sub-cases. These nine learning

cells included: two learning programs, two learning clubs, two learning salons, and three organizations (see Chapter Five for detailed descriptions of the sub-cases).

After selecting a case and subunits of the case, researchers need to make clear the paths from which they can approach their research subject efficiently and effectively. In a case, "there are many potential paths of inquiry along which researchers angle their vision to look at the multiple phenomena of interest" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 18). Researchers need to make choices about which paths they will explore. Before the formal data collection starts, researchers usually should have basic information about space, time, and people in the case (Merriam, 1998) and a general interest in "some phenomenon in some potential physical sites" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 19). Based on research questions, researchers can "situate on the edge of local action" (Dyson & Genishi, 2005, p. 19) and gradually approach the center of their research subjects and highlight certain elements of the case that lead to the research questions (Dyson & Genishi, 2005). In my study, based on my research questions — how learners in a learning community construct their knowledge, and what/how socio-cultural and learning community factors shape knowledge construction— I first familiarized myself with the Zhabei Learning Community by observing the learning activities and learning environment in its eight streets and one town. After I got a brief impression about the selected case, I targeted the learning activities that had direct connections with my research questions from nine learning cells selected from six streets.

Participant Selection

According to Patton's (2002) classifications, I conducted my research with: (a) stratified purposeful sampling, which selects participants stratified by socioeconomic status within a larger population according to the research purpose; (b) intensity sampling, which targets "excellent or rich examples of the phenomenon of interest, but not highly unusual cases" (p. 234); and (c)

snowball or chain sampling which asks well-situated people to recommend valuable people or events relevant to the phenomenon investigated.

In a knowledge construction framework, learning is shaped by a socio-cultural context. Selecting the participants who are greatly influenced by socio-cultural factors helps audience and researchers understand the influence of social-cultural factors on learning. In my study, I first used stratified purposeful sampling to target several groups of learners whose learning and life experiences were shaped by social-cultural changes. For example, I selected four learners representing each of the following five groups: (a) unemployed workers who were laid off in the past due to the economic reforms and currently are working in one local community affair center; (b) white collar workers from two companies; (c) leaders from two companies; (d) elderly people, who are the main participants in the Zhabei community schools; (e) and the workers who rushed from rural areas to the urban areas due to the economic and social changes. I narrowed my sampling among these five groups by purposely selecting participants within the selected learning cells who had representative experiences and could provide rich information for my study. In addition to these 20 learners, I also selected nine people to formally interview for information about the Zhabei Learning Community and the policies of the Chinese learning communities. These nine people were: two researchers who were familiar with the research, policy and practice of Chinese learning communities; four administrators responsible for the Zhabei Learning Community, the Zhabei community schools, the migrant issues in the Zhabei District, and the reemployment issues in the Zhabei District respectively; three instructors/ facilitators responsible for two programs for the elderly people and one club for the migrant workers respectively. The participants selected within these five groups followed the below criteria:

1. The learners were selected from the nine learning cells and belonged to one of the five groups.

2. To investigate how the socio-cultural factors shape knowledge construction, learners selected were those whose lives were impacted by the socio-cultural changes within the past five to twenty years.

3. The learners selected had lived in the local community for at least one year, which enabled them to become very familiar with the Zhabei Leanring Community and the local community's custom, rules and cultures.

4. With the stratified purposeful sampling method, the learners selected presented a range of genders, ages, careers, and social positions representing a variety of socioeconomic status within a larger population.

5. The instructor/facilitator and administrators had worked in the community for at least one year and knew the local community well.

6. All the participants understood Mandarin and could speak Mandarin.

With regard to finding the participants, I contacted the following people and asked them to recommend participants based on my criteria: one director and one administrator responsible for the Zhabei Learning Community, one Zhabei governmental officer responsible for the macro-development of the Zhabei Learning Community, one director responsible for the Zhabei labor training, one vice-principal of a community school, two instructors/facilitators, and two researchers who had close relationships with the organizations and institutions in the Zhabei District. Snowball sampling was also used throughout the recruitment process: after I recruited the first participant in each group, I asked him/her to recommend other potential participants within the selected sub-cases. Some recommended their colleagues or friends. I tried to ask for

permission to distribute the recruitment information among the learners through the Zhabei Learning Community Webpage, but the request was indirectly rejected. It was my experience that it was very difficult to recruit the participants without the support of the governmental leaders and administrators, especially to recruit the participants from the selected learning cells rather than recruiting learners randomly in the Zhabei District.

<div align="center">Data Collection</div>

There are mainly four methods for qualitative researchers to collect data: "(a) participating in the setting, (b) observing directly, (c) interviewing in depth, and (d) analyzing documents and material culture" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.97). In my study, I used observation, interview, and documents as my data collection methods.

Interview

The purpose of the interview is to "allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (Patton, 2002, p.341). The interview is used when "we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them" (Merriam & Simpson, 2000, p.72) or the past events that cannot be replicated. Through the interview, researchers get to know participants' feelings, thoughts, intentions, and their stories in a certain context.

There are several types of interviews based on the interview structures, ranging from a structured interview, to a semi-structured interview to an entirely open-ended interview (Merriam, 2009). In a structured interview, or a standardized open-ended interview, researchers ask each participant the same questions with exactly the same words, which is very structured (Patton, 2002); in an entirely open-ended interview, or an informal conversational interview, researchers rely "entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction" (Patton, 2002, p. 342); and in a semi-structured interview, "either all of the questions

are more flexibly worded, or the interview is a mix of more and less structured questions" (Merriam, 2009, p.90).

To explore how learners construct knowledge, I interviewed 20 learners using the semi-structured interview method — four participants from each of the five groups spread across the selected learning cells. To get the context information about the current Chinese learning community and the instructional strategies of the Zhabei Learning Community, I interviewed three instructors/facilitators, three administrators, and two researchers using the semi-structured interview method. Additionally, I had informal talks with other administrators, instructors/facilitators, and learners in the Zhabei Learning Community on a regular basis.

For the interview questions, Marshall and Rossman (2006) suggest designing the interview questions according to the research approach. For example, if researchers have interests in "eliciting participants' meanings for events and behaviors" and "generating a typology of cultural classification schemes" (p. 104), they can use the ethnographic interview to "elicit insiders' cultural knowledge" (p.104). Spradley (1979) suggests three types of questions to elicit participants' cultural knowledge: descriptive questions to collect participants' language, structural questions to explore the basic units of participants' cultural knowledge, and contrast questions to show the meanings of various terms.

In this study, to elicit learners' views of their learning experiences and generate the patterns of knowledge construction, I employed Spradley's ethnographic interview questions guideline to frame my standardized open-ended interview questions for learners, which includes: (a) descriptive questions. For example, what were the important changes, successful experiences, or the difficulties the participants experienced from 2000 to 2008? (b) structural questions. For example, how did participants deal with such experiences? What strategies did they use? Why

did they use such strategies rather than others? What did they learn from such experiences? And (c) contrast questions. For example, how did the participants deal with similar issues in other contexts or in other situations? What did they learn from these different experiences? What are the differences in dealing with these issues in the learning community context versus the non-learning community context?

Besides the semi-structured questions, I also listed a set of topics that I explored informally with participants, such as participants' learning experiences and stories in the learning community, their use of the resources provided by the learning community, and their requirements for the learning community. I used semi-structured interview questions for the researchers, administrators, and instructors/facilitators to depict the context and background of the learning community and its development. The interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

Observation

To understand the case, researchers need to go to the site and observe the events and activities happening in the case. "Observation entails the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviors, and artifacts (objects) in the social setting chosen for study" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.98).

Merriam and Simpson (2000) list several questions regarding how to plan the observation, including: (a) What should be observed; (b) how researchers should record the observation; (c) how researchers guarantee the accuracy of the observation; and (d) what role the researchers should take in observation. Researchers might observe the physical settings, the participants, activities and interactions, conversations, etc. However, the focus of the observation should be determined by the conceptual framework and the research questions (Merriam & Simpson, 2000). In the field, researchers take quick notes during the observation. After the observation,

researchers write down as soon as possible their field notes, and describe the settings, the people and the activities, and their comments (Merriam & Simpson, 2000).

The role of the researchers could range from that of insiders as participants to outsiders as unobtrusive onlookers. The extent to which researchers should act as full participants or as onlookers depends on the nature of the study, the questions asked and the context of the case studied (Patton, 2002).

In my project, observation was another important data collection method. Based on my research questions, my observation purpose was to make clear what kind of instructional strategies the Zhabei Learning Community provided to its learners and how learners learned in the Zhabei Learning Community. I started to observe the routine daily life in the Zhabei District as a researcher. My role as a researcher was known to everyone involved. I obtained some fresh ideas without interfering with the community's working and at the same time earned the community's trust. I went with Hui, an administrator, and Lee, one of the directors of the Zhabei Learning Community, to visit the community schools in eight streets and one town and different learning sites in Zhabei. I also informally observed the stores, restaurants, cultural centers, entertainment clubs, local residential apartment complexes, and local community affair centers, etc.

As I gradually became more familiar with the community, to get more inside information about how learning activities were conveyed through different networks and different interactions, I observed some incidental learning activities within the selected cells (see Table 3.1). For example, I observed and partially audio-taped the classroom learning activities of one photograph salon; I also observed and partially audio/video taped the classroom learning activities of two programs and their performances outside of the classrooms. I was given

permission to take some pictures and videos in all of these places. Meanwhile, I still maintained

my routine daily observation. I attended some of the meetings and seminars, such as community

education evaluation preparation meetings for instructors and administrators, expert panel

Table 3.1. *Learning cells observed*

Elements addressed in learning	Fields/sites	Times observed	Supporters/sponsors
Collaboration; Local community issues; Social, cultural, and historical heritages	Ground Calligraphy Salon	2	Culture and Education Office of the Gonghe Xin Street
Collaboration; local community issues	West Zhijiang Chorus Program	3	The West Zhijiang Street Community School
	Golden Dream Fashion Show Program	3	Daning Street Community School
	Bao Shan Photography Salon	2	Bao Shan Street Community School

meetings for community education evaluation, community school evaluation meetings, a seminar

for facilitators/instructors about how to edit books and reading materials for learners in the

community schools, and a seminar for instructors/facilitators about citizens' etiquette. I visited

several local residential communities and their residential committee offices. I attended a 10th

Anniversary party of a well-known learning organization research institution in China. Hundreds

of people from different learning organizations in China were invited to this celebration party.

Documents

   Observations and interviews did not provide all the information I needed. To understand the

background information and policies of the Chinese learning community, I used documents as

my data collection method. Mcculloch (2004) provides a comprehensive analysis of different

types of documents, including primary, secondary, solicited, unsolicited, virtual, archival records,

printed media (such as books, official reports, proceedings, newspapers, magazines and

periodicals), and literature (such as novels and poems, which provide rich documentary resources). These documents are categorized into three types: official documents, institutional records and personal archives. Diaries, letters and autobiographies are important personal documents for researchers who have an interest in the nature of the people and the broader social and public dimensions reflected by these personal documents. Mcculloch (2004) notes that diaries, letters and autobiographies are valuable resources for some researchers because they reveal "personal and private attitudes, aspirations and ambitions" (p. 101) and provide "important and often unique insights into the detail and variety of life as viewed by individuals, 'true to life' even in their most problematic characteristics" (p.127).

In my study, I examined and analyzed the official and institutional documents such as policies, media reports, and official reports to trace the development of the Chinese learning communities and to understand the factors that shape the development of the learning community. I collected institutional documents such as program introductions; learning activities launched by the Zhabei Culture and Education Office and the learning organizations in Zhabei; eight community school annual reports and annual plans; reports from the learning organizations; and videos introducing the learning communities in China, learning communities in Shanghai, and the learning activities in the Zhabei District. I also collected some participants' personal documents such as their name cards with a variety of titles, their art products, and their learning materials to understand how they construct knowledge and how socio-cultural contexts shape their way of knowledge construction.

Data collection lasted for about 3 months. From May 2008, I contacted the key officials and administrators, became familiar with the local community and some learning sites, and collected some documents. From June to July 2008, I conducted interviews, observations, and

analyzed more documents. From the end of July to August, I organized and began analyzing the data I had collected. I stopped my data collection process in August because as I collected my data, I was thinking of the themes and organized the information from data in an informal way. I listened to the tape after the interviews and I informally thought through all the data collected. I felt I had enough data to address my research questions by August. During the whole data collection process, I wrote research diaries and memos from time to time to record what I observed and what my impressions and questions were about the Zhabei Learning Community.

Data Analysis

Inductive analysis reasoning principles guided me to analyze the data. Inductive analysis is a reasoning process in qualitative research that begins with specific data from which one generalizes the categories, themes or a theory (Thomas, 2003). It begins from particular examples and moves to general concepts, principles, or theory. Inductive analysis is most suitable for answering the questions that cannot be answered by a currently existing theory and must be explored from the data collected. The advantage of inductive analysis is that it can generate new knowledge and can contribute to new theory development.

Doing inductive analysis is a process of generalizing the specific data into themes or theory. Thomas (2003) stated that the outcome of an inductive reasoning analysis is a model or framework developed from the categories based on the raw data coding. He described the process of inductive coding as including the following steps: (a) read the text data; (b) identify the specific segments of information related to answering the research questions; (c) summarize the segments and create the general categories; (d) reduce overlap and redundancy among the categories; and (e) create a model or themes incorporating the categories.

Constant Comparative Analysis Method

One of the most commonly used data analysis methods applying inductive reasoning is the constant comparative analysis method. The constant comparative method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) has been applied broadly in analyzing qualitative data. For example, Boeije (2002), responding to the fact that researchers find it vague about how to analyze data using the constant comparative method, systematically described five steps to compare a variety of interview data resources, of which I list the first three steps that were applied in my study: (a) comparison within a single interview; (b) comparison between interviews within the same group; and (c) comparison of interviews from different groups.

The first step is to compare the different parts of a single interview. In this step, Boeije suggested coding one segment of a single interview and generating the categories that occur more than once. Then the researchers compare the other fragments relating to this category to find out if new information is given. From this comparison, the researchers generate the major categories or themes used as the criteria for comparing the other interviews in the same group. The second step is to compare the other interviews in the same group. In this step, the researchers compare the fragments from different interviews that share the same issues and discover the similarities and differences among these different interviews; and finally, the researchers combine the codes/concepts generated from these different interviews. The third step is to compare the interviews, focusing on a specific issue from two different groups, and to find the similar and the different themes in these two different groups.

On analyzing a single interview, Grbich (2007) provided two types of data analysis strategies: preliminary data analysis, which is an ongoing data analysis process undertaken every time data are collected, and thematic data analysis, which is a process of reducing the raw data,

categorizing the data, and finally summarizing the themes from the categories. She suggested using a block and filing approach in the process of reducing and categorizing the data. With the block and file approach, the researcher highlights the important segments in the text, groups the segments and places them into a table, and then categorizes the segments from each of the columns. The advantage of this approach is that you can trace the large chunks of data quickly and clearly. However, this approach is not suitable for huge columns of data.

Coding is the initial part of abstracting the raw data into categories. Charmaz (2006), based on Glaser's (1978) ideas, suggested line-by-line coding and focused coding strategies. In line-by-line coding, researchers name each line of the data transcribed and remain open to the data. In focused coding, the researchers use "the most significant and/or frequent earlier codes to sift through large amounts of data" (Charmaz, 2006, p.57).

Application of Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative analysis method was employed in analyzing the data in my dissertation, with Grbich's (2007) analysis strategies, Charmaz's (2006) coding strategies, and the comparative steps suggested by Boeije (2002). In my study, to explore the patterns of knowledge construction and the factors that shaped the knowledge construction patterns in the learning community, I analyzed the interview data from five groups of people, each group included four participants (see Table 3.2 and Table 3.3 for examples of how I analyzed the data).

First, I compared data from within one interview data from the first group of the participants, the elderly people, using the following analysis procedures: (a) I copied the original data in the first column in EXCEL, highlighting the key interview segments relative to knowledge construction process, tools, and factors; (b) I coded the important parts of the segments with words, phrases or short sentences and put the coded parts into the second column

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in EXCEL; (c) I compared and categorized the important parts of every segment and put the

categorized parts into the third column in EXCEL; (d) I clustered the categories into groups

according to the research questions; (e) I deleted the overlapping categories or the categories

that had no close connections with the research questions; and (f) I re-clustered the categories

into several big groups and generated the main themes that connect these categories together.

Second, I compared the four interviews in the first group. I combined the codes/concepts

generated from these four interviews, and generated the themes/categories from these

comparisons; third, I compared the themes/categories generated from five groups of the learners

and generated the themes and categories from these comparisons; and finally, I examined the

compensatory information provided by the observation data, the document data, and the

interview data from the administrators, the instructors/ facilitators and the researchers.

Table 3.2. *An example of analyzing single interview data*

Line No.	Column 1: Original data	Column 2: Coded data	Column 3: Category
226	Lin: Yes.		
227	Bo: You said the ground calligraphy had a big influence (to the local community). Besides the fact that some children saw your writing and wanted to learn from you, what else?		
228	Lin: Many people, a group wrote together sometimes...	A group of people write together— group learning	Collective learning; radiation
229	Bo: influenced the local people.		
230	Lin:…		

Based on this examination, I confirmed the findings I derived from interview data from five

groups of the learners.

"Writers of any research proposal must develop a sound rationale for the choice of methodology" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006, p.199). Merriam and Simpson (2000) believe that validity (internal and external validity) and reliability are important considerations for the trustworthiness and believability of qualitative research. Internal validity refers to how congruent the findings are with reality. External validity refers to the extent to which findings could be

Table 3.3. *An example of generalizing categories/themes based on the group comparisons*

Groups	Participants	Knowledge construction patterns		
		Radiation	Circulation	Simulation
Elderly people	Jiang	Line: 103-106…		
	Lin	Line:199-204; 227		Line: 97, 163-164...
	Qiong			Line: 257-260, 279
	Yang			Line: 576-583…
Unemployed workers	Shen		Line: 516-535	
	Chan		Line: 627-632	
	Hu	Line: 489-494	Line: 252-260	
	Fan		Line: 318;332	

generalized to other situations. To enforce the internal and external validity, Merriam and Simpson (2000) recommend strategies such as: thick description to provide detailed information about the research; triangulation— engaging in the research situation for a significant amount of time; selecting multiple sites, multiple resources of data and methods, and using multiple investigators, member checks from the informants, peer/colleague examination, and statement of researchers' experiences and bias. Marshall and Rossman (2006) recommend researchers use a researcher partner, cross-checking, and peer debriefing to limit bias in interpretations. Reliability refers to the extent to which the findings can be replicated. Merriam and Simpson (2000) suggest triangulation, peer examination and audit trail strategies to enhance the reliability of the research.

Some of the above strategies were used in my study. For example, in order to examine how knowledge was socially constructed in the Zhabei Learning Community and the factors that shaped knowledge construction, I used triangulation — multiple data collection methods including interviews, observations, documents; multiple interviewees such as the learners, instructors/facilitators, administers, officials and researchers; and multiple observation settings such as the classrooms, the learning centers, and pubic places. To guarantee that I interpreted the meanings of the informants correctly, I employed thick descriptions and peer review.

Language was a big issue in my data analysis process. My data was collected in China, which involved the translation issue. I translated the IRB, the consent forms, and the interview questions into Chinese. I recorded all the conversations, interviews, and observations in Chinese and coded them with Chinese phrases. The findings and the relevant supporting evidence were translated into English. I translated parts of my dissertation, including case description, part of the conclusion and discussion, into Chinese and sent these translations to the people responsible for the Zhabei Learning Community to check the authenticity of my study. To ensure that I correctly interpreted the data and that my data were consistent with the local context, I consulted three professional language experts who were born in America or in China and whose interests are English language/literature/translation for assistance with some proverbs, idioms, and unique usages that might lose their meanings in an English context (Wang, 2006). I expressed in detail the background information and the norms embedded in some Chinese data and asked those professional language experts to check if my English translation reflects my original data in Chinese. Finally, I used the method of back translation to further check on my translation quality and detect some of the problems associated with poor translations (Hambleton, & Kanjee, 1993) in my data. Back translation is the process of translating the source language to the target

language using the first translator, then translating the target language back to the source language using the second translator (Hambleton, & Kanjee, 1993; Pena, 2007). I asked Zhang, a faculty member of the Shanghai Theatre Academy, to help me with the back translation. Her major is English/Chinese translation, and she has been in Shanghai since 1998. She was a good choice for this back translation because her expertise is English-Chinese translation, and she has a good understanding of Chinese culture and Shanghai culture and customs. Since there are so many data in my dissertation, I asked Zhang to translate selected data into Chinese (see Appendix D for the back-translation examples). The criteria I used to select those parts of the back-translation data were:

1. Data reflect 5 patterns of knowledge construction.

2. Data reflect some of the factors shaping knowledge construction.

3. Some data are connected to Chinese culture and are not easy to translate into English.

4. Some data are mixed with the Shanghai dialect and Shanghai culture and customs and are not easy to translate.

The detailed procedures of the back translation were: First, I translated those selected Chinese data into an English version; then Zhang back-translated the selected data in the English version into Chinese. The original Chinese data and back-translated Chinese versions were compared to identify differences (Hambleton & Kanjee, 1993; Pena, 2007). When there were discrepancies, Zhang and I reviewed the original Chinese version, the back- translated Chinese version and also my English translation version to detect the causes of the discrepancies. Finally, after discussion, we made some modifications, either modifying my English translation version or Zhang's back translation version (Collazo, 2005; Kim & Kim, 1999) to ensure the quality of the translation.

Researcher Bias and Assumptions

In qualitative research, researchers try to achieve validity of research through rigorous research design. To reduce the occurrence of biased data, researchers should be aware of the influence of their subjectivity. Gray (2003) argued that researchers' subjectivity and social identity will not only decide their choices of topics but will also have an effect on what they are seeking to observe. Factors such as researchers' lived experiences, their social and political positions, their theoretical frameworks, their race, age, and sex, etc. might shape their subjectivities and further, have an influence on their relations with their participants and their data collection and data analysis. Research position is another important factor showing the extent to which researchers' subjectivities will impact their research. The more the researchers represent the voices of participants, the more they will try to avoid their own subjectivity influence in research.

My research topic, knowledge construction in the learning community, was based on my personal interest. I have had interests in adult learning and social affairs for a long time. I particularly have an interest in adult learning in a social context and how learners create their knowledge in the context of a learning community, which inspired me to do this research.

My social position enabled me to access the site without much difficulty. I built a good relationship with the community and government leaders in the Shanghai Zhabei District in the past, which created a good opportunity for me to recruit the participants and to access the site. In summer 2007, I started to contact the community I investigated. In the spring of 2008, I contacted more people responsible for the learning activities in the Zhabei Learning Community. By the time I arrived at the site, I was treated friendly, and I was able to access many internal documents, though every time I needed to get permission in order to make copies of the

documents. However, this close relationship with the community and government leaders is transactional and reciprocal. It might have prevented some participants from expressing their negative experiences to me. For example, in interview, some participants did not like to reveal some of their negative learning experiences in the programs offered by the local learning community. I assumed this was because they knew of my close relationship with the community leaders. It also prevented me from critically focusing on the negative aspects of the Zhabei Learning Community. I was limited and potentially put myself in a position that favored the positive side of the Zhabei Learning Community.

In terms of research position, I represented the learners' position and focused on the learners' views about knowledge construction. My theoretical framework: knowledge constructions among learners, required that I placed the learners at the forefront and the instructors/facilitators, administrators, and researchers at the backstage as background information. In order to get an insider's view, I tried to avoid the influence of my pre-assumptions in my data collection and analysis process. For example, in my interviews, I tried not to mislead interviewees' thoughts based on my interests and experiences, though sometimes I needed to pull back the conversation when some participants stayed far away from the interview questions. Occasionally, I provided some examples to inspire some participants to provide more detailed data. In my data analysis process, I presented plenty of the original data from the participants as evidence to support my assertions and let the original data speak for the participants.

My theoretical framework guided my data collection. In interviews, at the beginning, I focused on some particular issues that had more connections with my theoretical framework. Later, I realized this restrained me from seeing some important issues that were not addressed by

theories. In such a situation, I adjusted my interview guides and added some extra questions when it was necessary for new thoughts and ideas to emerge.

In addition to my position and my theoretical framework, there were other factors, such as language and limited time, which also impacted my study. For example, my position required me to gather participants' views to analyze data. However, the fact that I could not speak the Shanghai dialect well made this reviews more difficult to achieve. Some key and nuanced information has been lost in cases where some participants could not express their ideas freely in Mandarin. In interviews, some participants just could not help speaking Shanghainese from time to time, and some participants spoke other local dialects, which really caused some trouble for data transcriptions. I had to skip some words for which I could not figure out their exact meanings, though in face-to-face interviews I understood what they meant. I stayed at the site for about three months to collect data, which was a very short period of time to examine the complex social learning phenomenon in this learning community with many subunits involved. I contacted some of the participants thereafter by telephone and email to clarify some information that I was not sure about. In summary, the local dialects some participants spoke became a barrier to representing the participants' views thoroughly, and finally, three months' time was somewhat limiting in exploring such a complex social learning phenomenon.

CHAPTER 4

CASE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the study was to understand how knowledge is constructed in a geographical learning community in the Zhabei District of Shanghai, China. The four research questions for this study were: (a) What are the patterns of knowledge construction in the learning community? (b) what are the social-cultural factors that shape knowledge construction in learning community? (c) what are the learning community factors that shape knowledge construction in the learning community? (d) how do social-cultural and learning community factors together shape the knowledge construction?

An embedded case study was chosen for the research design, and semi-structured, in-depth interviews were employed to collect data. Twenty purposefully selected participants were interviewed by the researcher using a list of open-ended questions about their learning and life experiences. This chapter begins with a description of the case and is followed by the introduction of the sub-cases and the participants selected within the sub-cases.

Description of the Case

In an effort to address recent social problems, China is engaged in building a harmonious society using many strategies, one of which is to develop a lifelong learning society composed of sub-social units such as learning cities, learning communities, learning towns, learning streets, and learning organizations and institutions. Starting in 2001, to promote a lifelong learning society from the district level, 114 national community education pilots and hundreds of local community education pilots were established in China ("*Notice of the first, second, third and fourth lists of the national community education pilots,* " 2001, 2003, 2006, 2007). In this study, I

will target one of these 114 community pilots: the Zhabei Learning Community (the Zhabei District).

Location of the Case: Zhabei District

The case chosen, the Zhabei District, is one of the 18 districts in Shanghai, which is the largest city in China in terms of population and one of the largest metropolitan areas in the world. It is a famous business, trade, and financial center of China and is a modern and fashionable city. In 2007, Shanghai had a population of over 18.58 million people (Shanghai, Population Section, ¶ 1). With such a huge population living in this tiny region, Shanghai is one of the most crowded cities in the world, albeit with a very high working efficiency. Located on China's central eastern coast at the mouth of the Yangtze River, Shanghai is a municipality of the People's Republic of China. Zhabei, situated in the northern part of Shanghai, is one of the 18 districts of Shanghai (see Figure 4.1).

Administratively, the Zhabei District is divided into eight streets (the administrative divisions, similar to wards) and one town. These eight streets and one town include: Pengpu Xincun Street, Linfen Street, Pengpu town, Daning Street, Gonghe Xin Street, West Tianmu Street, West Zhijiang Street, Baoshan Street, and Beizhan Street (see Figure 4.2). The Zhabei District also has one community college, nine community schools, 71 sub-sites of the community schools, and about 300 learning centers (“*Brief introduction about community education in Zhabei District*,” n. d.). These educational institutions and organizations are the main forces that develop the learning cells and provide the learning activities to the local people. In this study, the description will start at the district level, then down to the street level, and eventually to the

learning cells selected from the streets, and finally to the participants selected from the learning

cells.

The Zhabei District is 29.2 square kilometers. In 2007, its population was 817,968,

including 707,323 citizens and 110,645 migrants, representing 35 ethnic groups ("*General*

introduction about Zhabei, " Population and people Section, para. 1). According to the 2007

Figure 4.1. Location of Shanghai (left) and Zhabei (Right) [1]

Shanghai Annual Statistical Report, in the Zhabei District, out of the total population of 695,100,

about 9.65% are at or below 17 years old, 23.75% are 18-34 years old, 45.66% are 35-59 years

old, and 20.93% are at or above 60 years old (see Table 4.1).

Different parts of the Zhabei District have their own features and development strategies.

Northern Zhabei, including Pengpu Xincun Street and Linfen Street, is located between the

urban and the rural areas and has a large amount of migrant workers. Compared to other parts of

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[1] Both maps were retrieved Feb 12 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanghai

the district, northern Zhabei looks a little "desolate." One can seldom see glorious skyscrapers or

modern entertainment bars, but one can see heavy manufacturing factories, some large
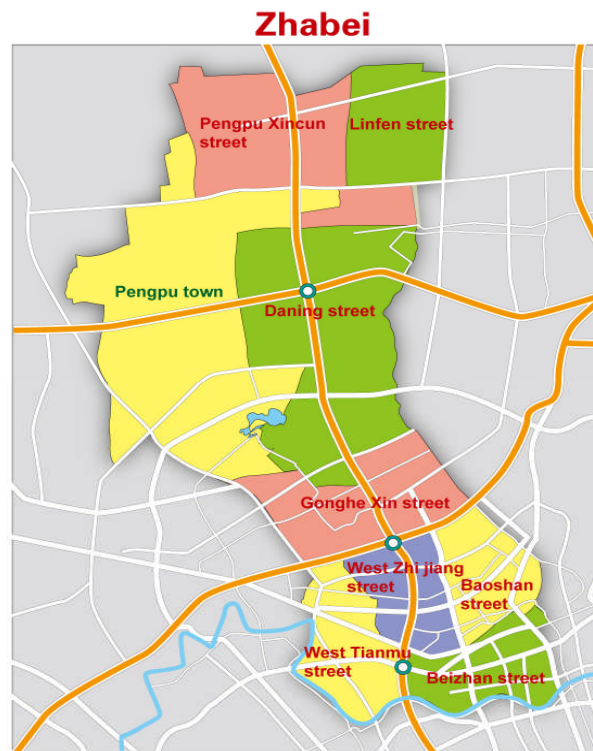
Figure 4.2. Zhabei District's eight streets and one town[2]

Table 4.1 Compilation of Statistics about Age Distribution in Shanghai Zhabei District
(Shanghai Annual Statistics, 2007)

	Total	17 and below	18-34	35-59	60 and above
Number (ten thousands)	69.51	6.71	16.51	31.74	14.55
Percentage	100%	9.65 %	23.75%	45.66%	20.93%

supermarkets, some large stores selling architectural construction materials, and the small

grocery stores and clothing stores. The Linfen Street Community Education and Culture Center

is one of the most attractive places for the local people. The middle part of the Zhabei District,

including Pengpu Town, Daning Street, and Gonghe Xin Street, is famous for its tourism, culture,

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[2] The map was adapted from a map which was retrieved Feb 12 2009 from
httpwww.lvyou114.comMapPhoto20072161582.jpg   http://www.soobb.com/Destination/Image/167739/

entertainment, and verdure. In the middle part of the Zhabei, there are many modern apartment complexes surrounded by green areas and parks such as Zhabei Park, 99 GreenLands, Guangzhong Park, and Daning Lingshi Green land. The Songyuan Tea House, the Shanghai Circus, and Shanghai University add additional cultural flavors to the middle part of Zhabei. In the past, Peng Pu Town was a village and later became the town of Zhabei. It is now one of the richest towns in Shanghai. Most of its citizens, who were once peasants, rent their apartments out for a very good living. Pengpu Town is famous for its popular culture. Southern Zhabei is the economic, business, cultural, and transportation center of the Zhabei District. The Zhabei District government is located in this area. At the Southwestern corner of the Zhabei District is the famous Shanghai Railway Station, which is very near the seat of the Zhabei District government and which is surrounded by the No. 1, No. 2 , No. 3 and No. 4 subway lines, plenty of buses and shuttles, many big malls, hotels, restaurants and business buildings. This area is called the ever-bright acropolis (see Figure 4.3). Southern Zhabei is also famous for its historical sites.

Zhabei Learning Community

Historically, the economic situation in the Zhabei District is poor compared to other districts. However, community education in Zhabei is well-developed. In the early 1980s, Zhabei community education at its first stage focused on initiating education community outreach for the school students in the local communities. The communities provided the educational sites for school moral education, and the schools opened their educational resources to the local residents. At the beginning of 1990s, Zhabei community education at its second stage targeted the development of all of the local people and the development of the local community. The streets organized the "weekend schools" and "citizen schools," and West Zhijiang Street started its first "lifelong education holiday" in 1998. In April 2000, the Chinese National Education Ministry

authorized the Zhabei District as one of the eight national experimental community education

pilots. Zhabei community education came to its third stage: the era of the learning community

("*Brief introduction of the Zhabei community education*," n. d).
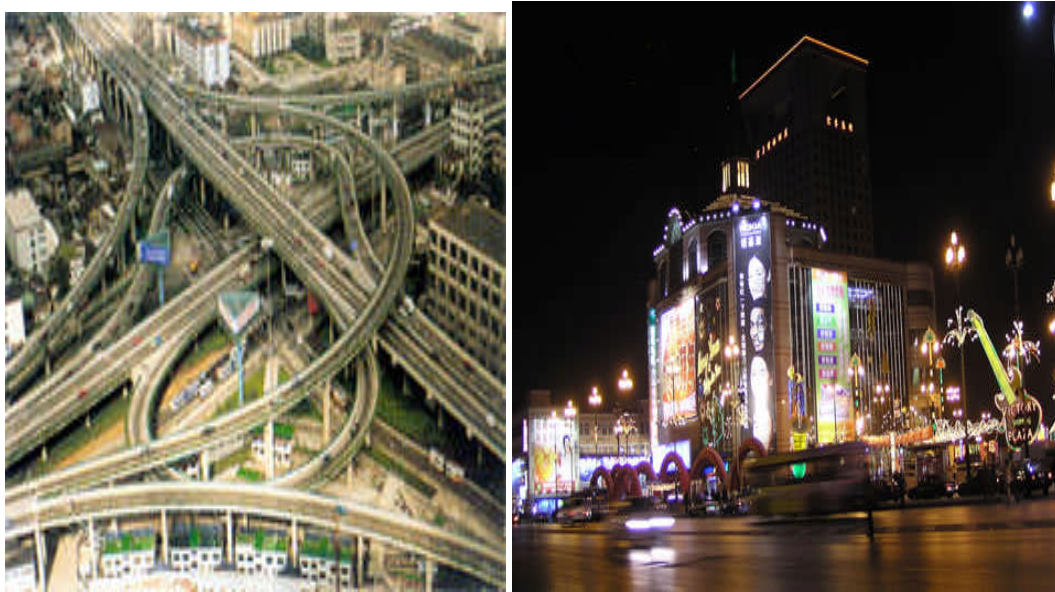
Figure 4.3. Transportation (left)[3] and the ever-bright acropolis in Zhabei (right)[4]

Based on the idea of lifelong learning, the aim of the Zhabei Learning Community is to

build a lifelong harmonious learning environment for everyone in the community. Zhabei

learning community developed three features: (a) the use of multi-media and the multi-networks

to promote lifelong learning in the Zhabei Learning Community; (b) the use of experimental

projects to address the community issues; and (d) the use of the local social resources and

cultural and historical heritages to explore local knowledge.

Promoting lifelong learning with multiple strategies

Shanghai promotes the learning society enterprise by nurturing the learning cells such as

the learning communities at the district level, learning communities at the street level, learning

neighborhoods, learning apartment buildings, learning families, and learning organizations and

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[3] The picture was retrieved June 1, 2009 from http://www.sucg.com.cn/img/service/gonghe.jpg
[4] The map was retrieved June 1, 2009 from http://img.ungou.com/ungouPic/2007/8/18/2007818145134945.jpg

institutions (Ye, Interviewed in June 16, 2008). In the Zhabei Learning Community, the government used multiple strategies to promote the lifelong learning enterprise.

The aim of lifelong education is not concerned with building one or two schools; it is about building a learning network for the local people so that the local people can learn whatever they would like to learn no matter where they are. Building multiple learning networks is one of the important strategies to promote lifelong learning.

Building the multi-network means integrating the community resources to promote lifelong learning, which means all of the social units such as the hospitals, the cultural centers, the schools and the companies in the Zhabei District open their educational sites to each other, share the human resources, and provide the available resources (Hui, Interviewed in July 7, 2008).

In the Zhabei Learning Community, the Zhabei Education Bureau is the main force to promote learning activities in the administrative streets and neighborhoods (see Figure 4.4, at the right side). It mainly provides the macro-level services and guidance on learning community development to its subordinate organizations. Under the leadership of the Zhabei Education Bureau, street/town education committee offices organize the cultural performances and the learning campaigns in the streets and in the neighborhoods, collaborating with the Culture and Education Division and the neighborhood committee (see Figure 4.4, in the middle); also, community schools and the branch schools and neighborhood learning sites offer learning activities mainly to the local retirees and those who have no jobs, guided by the Community Education and Citizen Learning Guidance Center (see Figure 4.4, at the right side). Those community schools also nurture the learning cells such as learning learning families and learning groups.

In the Zhabei Learning Community, about 29 professional organizations and institutions at the district level, such as the Labor Bureau, the Women's Federation, the Science and Technology Committees, and the Elderly People's Association are the collaborative forces that collectively support the enterprise of the learning community (see Figure 4.4, at the left side). These organizations and institutions provide lifelong learning activities mainly to employees in the workforce. At the street level, the divisions such as the Labor Office, the Population Office, and the professional training centers carry out the concrete learning activities under the supervision of these 29 organizations and institutions (see Figure 4.4, at the left side).

There are interactions among the subsidiary units of the 29 organizations and institutions responsible for learning in the workplace, the Streets\Town Community Education Committee offices and its subunits responsible for the learning campaigns in the streets, and the community schools and their branches responsible for learning in the local neighborhoods (See Figure 4.4). For example, the Shanghai General Labor Union usually provides some learning activities to employees within professional settings such as the power companies, the hospitals, and the courts. However, in order to provide the basic professional knowledge to the people living in the neighborhoods, it needs to maintain contact with the Cultural and Education Divisions to support its campaigning of the basic professional knowledge (Hui, Interviewed in July 7, 2008). Another example is efforts to prevent bird flu. The eight bureaus of the Science Committee in Zhabei, for instance, can organize publicity activities in the administrative wards; they can also provide the relevant reading materials to the employees from the professional organizations and institutions (Hui, Interviewed in July 7, 2008). This comprehensive learning network aims to guarantee that

everyone has the opportunity to access any learning resource in the community, and everyone

can learn no matter where he/she is.

Zhabei Community Education Experimental Committee（Leaders: Governor and vice-governors of the Zhabei District）

Community Education Leadership Team constituted by a variety of Committees, Offices, and Bureaus	Office of the Zhabei Community Education Experimental Work (In the Zhabei Education Bureau)

Divisions such as Labor Office, Population Office, professional training centers	Streets\Town Community Education Committee	Community Education and Citizen Learning Guidance Center (At Xingjian Community College)

Training and learning in organizations such as companies, hospitals, etc.	Culture and Education Division	Community Schools (most of the schools are in Community Education and Culture Centers)

Neighborhood Committee	Branch schools

Neighborhood, Families	Neighborhood learning sites

Figure 4.4. Organization Diagram of the Zhabei Learning Community

The government pushes lifelong learning systematically, and created a lifelong learning

network serving the local people's learning. However, it is not enough for the government alone

to push this learning community enterprise. Jiang, the administrator of the Zhabei Education

Bureau, told me that Government serves as one hand, and the market serves as the other hand,

and these two hands together promote the learning community. The Zhabei government realized

the vitality of the grass root organizations, the non-governmental learning organizations, and the

informal groups and tried to empower these organizations to organize learning activities. For

example, in the past, the government controlled the teaching, learning, and management

activities of the learning community. Now it empowers the local community college to guide the

community schools. In the past, the government focused on developing district level learning

activities. Now its objects are to stimulate learning activities at the street level and gradually

expand the learning activities to the neighborhood, the companies and the other organizations

and institutions in the local community (Lee, Interviewed in July 7, 2008). For example, the

Zhabei government pushes traditional classroom learning towards informal group learning

organized by the non-governmental organizations. It extends the learning activities to the

community schools, to the neighborhoods, and gradually to all of the social units in Zhabei. The

Zhabei government aims to stimulate the vitality of the social organizations from the grass roots,

and it stretches its feelers down to every social unit within its subdivisions (Lee, Interviewed in

July 7, 2008).

The government uses many strategies to promote learning sites down to the local

communities. The community school evaluation is one of these strategies. Community school

being evaluated are required to have a certain number of learning sites in the neighborhoods.

After the evaluation, the community schools will realize that they should increase the number of

learning sites if they do not provide enough learning sites to the neighborhoods.

The government publicizes the idea of lifelong learning and launches the learning events

by taking advantage of the traditional holidays, the new policies, and the big events. For

example, after the policy of broadcasting in Mandarin was issued, nearly every street in Zhabei

organized campaigns to publicize knowledge of Mandarin. The lifelong education holidays are

one of the important events that promote the idea of lifelong learning, with the forms of the

learning product exhibition, the performances, the award meeting, the experience sharing, the

seminars, the special learning activities show in the neighborhoods, and the group learning

activities show ("*List of the National Lifelong Learning Activities at the districts and counties in*

Shanghai,", n.d.). In 1998, West Zhijiang Street in Zhabei started its first lifelong education

holiday (see Figure 4.5). From then on, every year West Zhijiang Street organized the Lifelong Education Holiday. At the beginning, the holiday mainly promoted the idea of lifelong learning. Later, its theme connected more and more to the work of community development and community education, such as unemployed people's reemployment and the development of the learning groups. Now the purposes of the West Zhijiang Street Lifelong Education Holiday are to promote lifelong learning, to create a platform for the learners to exhibit their learning products, and to provide information, consultations, and services to the local people. Hui, the administrator of the Zhabei Education Bureau, said: "we created for our civilians their own learning holiday. They enjoyed this holiday" (Hui, Interview in July 7, 2008).

Figure 4.5. The 9th (left) and the 10th (right) West Zhijiang Lifelong Education Holiday[5]

The performances, the knowledge competitions, the media reports, and the learning information posted on the information board in the neighborhoods also collectively publicize the idea of lifelong learning in the Zhabei community. For example, on January 31, 2007, Linfen Street organized a community education achievement exhibition with the theme of "learning, happiness, and harmony" at the Linfen Community Culture Center. Four hundred people attended this exhibition and watched the performance about the local learners' achievements. In

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[5] Both pictures were provided by one of the administrators responsible for the Zhabei Learning   Community.

September 2006, seminars on psychological consultation and calligraphy, the women fitness ball exercise competitions, the artful fashion exhibition, and the elderly people's Latin dance, etc. were presented at the Zhabei Lifelong Education Holiday. Linfen community education was also broadcast by Shanghai TV, Oriental TV, Zhabei Cable TV, and was reported by the Science and Technology Newspaper (*2008 Linfen Street community education evaluation report*, 2008), which attracted the attention of more people from other provinces and encouraged them to learn from it (Observation, June 2, 2008).

From the above analysis, we can see that the Zhabei government supports the learning community and promotes lifelong learning activities with multiple strategies, including: (a) integrating the learning resources from all of the social units in the streets and building a lifelong learning network for the local people; (b) stimulating and nurturing the vitality of the grassroot organizations, the non-governmental organizations and the informal learning groups; (c) taking advantage of the traditional holidays, the new policies, and the big events in publicizing the new knowledge; and (d) organizing a variety of other activities such as the artistic and cultural performances, the knowledge competitions, and the media reports. All of these strategies collectively publicize the idea of lifelong learning and promote learning community development in the Zhabei District.

Addressing community issues through experimental projects

The Zhabei Learning Community, similar to other learning communities in Shanghai, connects community development and its learning activities together through experimental projects. In Shanghai, some projects are sponsored to solve the problems arising in the process of establishing a learning community. For example, in 2007, Daning Street did a project titled *Experiment on developing the learning apartment building* ("*List of 2007< important> bidding*

projects on Shanghai community education experiment, " 2007). Other projects are sponsored to address the community problems. For example, in 2007, West Tianmu Street did a project titled *Strengthening the community education and promoting the urban disadvantaged people's employment* ("*List of 2007< important> bidding projects on Shanghai community education experiment,* " 2007). Every year, the learning communities at the district level nominate their own research projects based on their community development plans. At the end of the year, the learning communities in Shanghai exchange ideas from their research projects. Good research projects are awarded and nominated as demonstrative projects recommended to the other communities. In this way, the new good community education experiences transfer to the other communities and contribute to the learning society enterprise.

The process of carrying out these projects is a process of exploring the community problems and launching a series of new learning programs in the community. For example, in a project titled *How to build a happy Peng Pu by promoting the qualities of the disadvantaged people* in Pengpu Xincun Street, five groups of people were investigated: the unemployed, the special youth groups, the elderly, the disabled, and the migrants. After the needs analysis, relevant training programs and services were offered to these five groups. For example, based on the information provided by the research project, Pengpu Xincun Street helped the unemployed find new jobs using these strategies: (a) providing consultation services to increase the confidence of unemployed persons (b) providing training programs such as employment guidance, pre-employment training, and special skills training to 1781 unemployed people; (c) cooperating with the employment sites and the companies to explore more job openings for the unemployed; and (d) giving special policy support to those such as disabled people and those whose family members also lost their jobs (Pengpu Xincun Street, n. d.). Zhabei promoted the

learning community enterprise by focusing on solving some problems in the community

development process through research projects. Some mature and good programs organized in

the research projects of one street are demonstrated in other streets and gradually become routine

learning programs in the communities (Ye, Interviewed in June 16, 2008).

The experimental projects not only target solving community problems but also explore

the strategies for promoting the learning community development. In the process of promoting

the learning community development, the Zhabei government realized the vitality of the non-

governmental organizations in arranging learning activities and therefore supported projects

aimed at nurturing the non-governmental organizations. In Daning Street, such a project explored

how the government guides the development of non-governmental through the strategies of

community services, group evaluation, and government-sponsored bidding projects. For

example, in 2007 Daning Street organized about 70 non-governmental groups and 1500

members to participate in a variety of non-profit community services. These non-profit

community services provided the platforms for the non-governmental organizations to exchange

experiences, communicate with each other, and exhibit their learning products (*2008 Daning

Street community school evaluation report*, 2008).

Exploring the local knowledge

Every street and town has its own special geographical location, different economic

situations, and different social problems that need to be resolved. Therefore, the streets and town

are encouraged to explore their uniqueness in promoting the learning community. For instance,

Linfen Street is located between the urban and rural areas. Comparatively, it has more public

security problems because of the different living conditions between the urban and rural areas. In

Linfen Street, the focus of the community education is to maintain a stable and safe community.

West Tianmu Street will become a traffic hub at the North part of Shanghai, which requires the citizens to assume greater social responsibilities. Since every street has different social problems to solve, their community education strategies are not exactly the same (Ye, Interviewed in June 16, 2008).

The streets and town in Zhabei explore their own social, cultural, and historical resources and integrate these local resources into their learning activities. Using these local resources, the street and town create their own mainstream learning discourses and, correspondingly, the core learning activities.

Baoshan Street is famous for its historical and revolutionary heritage. Baoshan Street used this heritage to construct the discourse of "Red Baoshan" and launched a series of patriotism education activities focusing on this discourse. Baoshan Street organized students and local people to visit the revolutionary sites and published the book *History is Beckoning* as the reading material for the patriotism education; it compiled the comedy *Soul of the Martyr* and the small opera *Looking for the Treasure*, based on the local historical remains and the ruins, performing them in Shanghai. Additionally, it created knowledge competition items, it exhibited paintings and calligraphy for the 50th Anniversary of the Sino-Japanese War, and it organized family reading activities. Focusing on the discourse of "Red Baoshan," Baoshan Street expanded the connotation of patriotism education and embraced this historical heritage in a project aimed at creating a caring community culture, that is, it called on the local people to familiarize themselves with their local environment, to care about others, to provide social services to disadvantaged people, and to build a lovely community ("*Review of the history, and exploration of the future*," n.d, para. 1, 5).

Pengpu town is a town well know for its mass photography culture. In 1981, the first peasant photography team was organized. It was named by the Zhabei Government and Baoshan Government "The Home of Photography," and "The Home of Special Culture" respectively. In 2000, it was named by the National Culture Ministry as "The Home of China's Special Popular Art." Pengpu town focused on this branded photography to organize a series of photography activities, formed the photography groups, and built the photograph exhibition hall. Hundreds of the group members' products have received awards at the different levels of the photography competitions. Now, this art form has reached the local community, and the members include not only the peasants, but also the workers, teachers, and students in this town ("*Home of the photography,*" n. d., para. 1-2).

Daning Street has been involved in the work of establishing culturally focused apartment buildings for over 15 years (see Figure 4.6 on neighborhood and apartment complex). The residents of the apartment buildings establish their own learning communities where the heritage of these traditional famous apartment buildings is explored and reframe the buildings with the name "learning apartment buildings". In 2000, the families from these apartments were encouraged to read and learn for at least one hour per day. Daning Street also organized a proverbs collection activity for the families and organized the middle school students to be the internship team leaders of the apartment buildings. These learning activities are reaching into the families and spreading to the neighborhoods, strengthening the citizens' sense of belonging to the community ("*Daning Street,*" n.d.). Now, Daning Street aims to stretch its education in three directions: the learning groups, the apartment buildings, and the families. Currently, Daning Street has organized 64 mass learning groups, which have about 1064 members. It guides families in becoming learning families through a variety of learning forms such as workshops,

Figure 4.6. The neighborhood and apartment complex[6]

forums and salons; additionally, it nurtures the learning atmosphere in the apartment buildings by

exploring the expertise of the people living in these apartment buildings. In Daning, there now

are unique apartment buildings such as the reading apartment building, where citizens in this

building enjoy reading; the science and technology apartment building, where people are adept at

learning science and technology; and the gourmet apartment building, where residents share their

cuisine skills ("*Daning Street,* " n.d.).

Other streets in the Zhabei district also explore their local resources and integrate these

resources into their learning activities. For example, cooperating with the Tao Xingzhi Education

and Research Association and the Shanghai Creative Education Research Institution, Yonghe

Street applied the idea of "Learning by doing" in its lifelong education activities ("*Introduction

of Tao Xingzhi idea of education in the community*, " 2009). Linfen Street developed hundreds of

non-governmental learning groups organized by the local citizens (see Figure 4. 7) ("*The

characteristics of the learning groups' development in Linfen street,* " 2009).

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[6] The picture was retrieved Sep 25, 2009, from
http://img1.soufunimg.com/agents/2009_08/24/sh/project/1251094617689_000.jpg

Figure 4.7. Welcome 2008 Olympic Games performance by Daning Golden Dream Fashion Show Team (Left); the learning group's performance in Linfen street (right)[7]

Beizhan Street used one of its art schools, Baiyue Art School, to serve the primary and middle school students on the street and trained them in national singing and dancing ("*Brief introduction of the Beizhan Street Baiyue <amateurish> Art School,* " n.d.). Penpu Xincun Street explored the resources of the minority people on the street and organized temporary homes for the Tibetan middle school students studying in Pengpu Xincun Street, with the discourse "I have a home in Shanghai"("*Brief introduction of 'I have a home in Shanghai',* " n.d.). West Tianmu Street is an old street and has rich cultural and education resources. Rooted in these resources, West Tianmu Street has organized its lifelong education holiday every year since 1998 ("*Brief introduction of Lifelong Education Holiday in West Zhijiang Street,* " n.d.). West Zhijiang Street also developed its "Five hands project" according to the needs of the different groups of people. These five hands are: (a) big Hands with small hands (In a family, parents and their child learn together); (b) neighbors' hands in hands (Neighbors learn together); (c) multiple-skilled professional hands nurtured in the learning corners such as psychological consultation sites, English corners, gym and medical consultation sites, book and newspaper exchange sites; (d) employees' hands in hands (employees in the enterprises learn together), and

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[7] Both pictures were provided by one of the administrators responsible for the Zhabei Learning Community

(e) hands for the disadvantaged people (the street encourages the citizens to care about the disadvantaged people and give them a hand in learning).

In summary, the aim of the Zhabei Learning Community is to create a lifelong learning environment for its local people. Focusing on the goal of creating a lifelong harmonious learning community, the government built the administrative and professional networks from the top down, nurtured the non-governmental organizations, the learning groups and learning cells from the grass roots, and guided the direction of the learning community through multiple strategies such as evaluation, project bidding, and community services. Multi-media play an important role in publicizing the idea of lifelong learning.

To promote lifelong learning and learning community development, the Zhabei Learning Community developed three strategies. The first is to incorporate the efforts from multiple networks, such as media, the administrative networks, the professional networks and the nongovernmental networks, the second is to explore new learning programs through experimental projects that address community problems and the problems of learning community, and the third is to situate efforts in the local social resources and cultural and historical heritages, embracing these community heritages and resources in learning, and correspondingly developing the core learning activities.

The Zhabei Learning Community is like a magnet that attracts the local citizens through a variety of learning activities that have connections with learners' needs, community affairs and the historical and cultural heritages of the community. The Zhabei Learning Community is attractive to the local people because it is built on the local knowledge, and it is the home of lifelong learning for the local people.

Description of the Sub-Cases

Zhabei is the general case in this study. Nine learning cells, including two programs, two clubs, two salons, and three organizations selected from six streets, are the embedded sub-cases. In this section, I provide a description of the learning cells and introduce the participants selected from each of the learning cells.

Description of the Learning Cells and the Participants

To represent the general features of the Zhabei Learning Community, I selected the learning cells and correspondingly the participants from the northern, the middle, and the southern parts of the Zhabei District. These learning cells are supervised by the Education Bureau, the Zhabei Labor Bureau, and the Shanghai General Labor Union, respectively. The 20 participants represent the five groups of people (migrant workers, unemployed workers, white collar workers, elderly people and leaders) selected from nine learning cells (see Table 4.2 for detailed information about the participants and the sites selected).

Four learning cells for the elderly people. I interviewed four elderly participants from four learning cells: the Ground Calligraphy Salon, the West Zhijiang Chorus program, the Golden Dream Fashion Show program, and the Bao Shan Photography Salon (see Table 4.2). Most of these learning cells are organized by the non-governmental organizations but supported by the local government. The structure of these learning cells is informal: anyone can join these organizations any time and can stay in these organizations as long as they like. Learners are the main actors in organizing the learning activities in most of these learning cells.

Table 4.2. *Sites and participants*

Participants						Sites		
Group	Name	Age	Gender	Education	Position	Cells	Streets	Supervision
Elderly people	Lin	70	Male	Technical school	Retired	Ground Calligraphy Salon	Gonghe Xin	Zhabei Education Bureau
	Jiang	71	Male	College	Retired	Bao Shan Photography Salon	Baoshan	
	Yang	58	Female	Technical school	Retired	West Zhijiang Chorus Program	West Zhijiang	
	Qiong	72	Male	College	Retired	Golden Dream Fashion Show Program	Daning	
Migrant workers	Fan	35	Female	College	Housewife	Sisters Club	Pengpu Xincun	Zhabei Education Bureau
	Hong	46	Female	Senior middle school	Shop assistant			
	Shen	29	Male	Junior middle school	Cleaner	The New Shanghainese Club	Linfen	
	Chan	40	Male	Senior middle school	Cleaner			
Un-employ-ed workers	Sun	30	Male	College	Employment assistant	D.N. Community Affair Center	Daning	Zhabei Labor Bureau
	Xun	52	Male	Senior middle school	Employment assistant			
	Hu	47	Female	Technical school	Employment assistant			
	Wan	48	Female	College	Employment director			
White collar workers	Gu	30	Male	College	Technician	Shanghai X Y Trans Co.	Linfen	Shanghai General Labor Union
	Lang	37	Female	College	Technician	Shanghai HB Power Co.	Gonghe Xin	
	Hao	25	Female	Technical school	Technician			
	Yan	24	Female	Technical school	Technician			
Leaders	Zun	53	Male	Technical school	Department Manager	Shanghai XY Trans Co.	Linfen	Shanghai General Labor Union
	Yu	53	Male	Senior middle school	Department Director			
	Lian	30	Male	Technical school	General secretary of Youth League branch	Shanghai HB Power Co.	Gonghe Xin	
	Chau	36	Male	Technical school	Department Director			

The Ground Calligraphy Salon (Di Shu Yuan) was formally founded in 2004 in the

Gonghe Xin Street and has around 170 participants. Learning from the famous ancient Chinese

calligraphist Wang, Xizhi, who practiced his calligraphy on the ground with the water-brush pen,

the amateur calligraphers write calligraphy on the grounds in front of the parks in Zhabei with giant water brush pens made by these calligraphers instead of the traditional brush pens with ink.

In 1998, some amateur calligraphers had already written calligraphy on the ground of the Zhabei Park, and in 2003, several undergraduate students made a short video of this calligraphy group. This video was shown on the Oriental TV channel, and the ground calligraphy became well- known as a result. The Culture and Education Office of Daning Street supported this activity and encouraged these amateurs to register this learning cell as the Ground Calligraphy Salon. In 2004, this Ground Calligraphy Salon was founded. The members, of their various ages, come from all over the country. Every morning from 7 am to 9 am, and afternoon starting from 5 p.m., the members of thissalon write calligraphy on the ground in front of the parks in Zhabei, which attracts many people from different places who come to watch.

Lin (see Table 4.2) was one of the salon leaders. He is a famous calligrapher. After he retired, he felt isolated and wanted to make more friends. He and the other two calligraphers organized this informal learning group. The members wrote ground calligraphy every day in front of the parks in the Zhabei District. I interviewed Lin at his apartment, which is near the Zhabei Park where he usually writes ground calligraphy. Lin enthusiastically introduced me to the history and functions of ground calligraphy and its influence on the community and the public. In the process of the interview, he also showed me the giant calligraphy pens he and the other members made. We watched the DVDs about ground calligraphy, and he explained to me the background information about these DVDs.

The Baoshan Photography Salon is a learning platform for elderly people who have an interest in sharing photography knowledge and skills. It was supported in 2004 by the Baoshan Street. The members meet once every month to share the photos they have taken and the

experiences of how they took those photos. Every year, the members travel two times together and exhibit their products. The five core members organized the learning activities of this salon and one staff member from the street facilitated the logistics of the Salon.

I interviewed Jiang (see Table 4.2), the team leader of the salon, at his apartment. Jiang was born in 1938. He started his photography career in the1950s. He joined several photography associations from 1990s and was invited by the Baoshan Street to be the Salon leader in 2004. He is very enthusiastic about photography. In his online blog, he wrote that in a snow winter, he sneakily "escaped" from his home to a remote county to take pictures of snow without telling his wife and children in advance. Jiang introduced me to the history of this learning salon and his learning experiences in this salon.

The West Zhijiang Chorus Program was organized by the West Zhijiang Street, and the Golden Dream Fashion Show Program was organized by the Daning Street. Most of time, the learners from these two organizations learn the professional skills and knowledge in classrooms and sometime perform as groups in the local communities. The members are mainly retired elderly people, and they learn two hours every week. The Fashion Show program was organized in 2000 for those who have an interest in fashion performance and catwalk. It had around 20 participants in 2008. An instructor facilitated the learners to learn the catwalk and about fashion shows. A core team composed of five members is responsible for finance management, stage management, professional guidance, costume props, and other issues. The West Zhijiang Chorus Program was organized in 2004 for those who have an interest in chorus and had around 90 members in 2008. An instructor trained the learners in professional chorus knowledge and skills, and a staff member and several learners acted as the team leaders and facilitated the programs.

I interviewed Yang from the West Zhijiang Chorus program and Qiong from the Golden Dream Fashion Show program (see Table 4.2). Both of them are very enthusiastic about their learning in these two cells. Yang, a Shanghainese, is one of the team leaders in the Chorus program. When she was 17, Yang was sent to Jingangshan, a historical revolution site, to receive re-education in the countryside, a movement initiated by Chairman Mao, Zedong from the middle of the 1950s to the end of the 1970s. She worked in the countryside as a farmer and later worked as a teacher in an art school in Jingganshan. She returned to Shanghai in 1993. Recommended by the local neighborhood committee, she joined a singing program in 2002 and later joined the West Zhijiang Chorus Program.

Qiong was born in 1937 and grew up during the Anti-Japanese war (The Second Sino-Japanese War, July 7, 1937 – September 9, 1945), the Chinese Civil War, and the Cultural Revolution. Before he retired, he worked as a university faculty member, a researcher in the research institutions, and a consultant in a governmental institution.

Two learning cells for migrant workers. I selected two learning cells for migrant workers: the Sisters Club (Jie Mei Ju Le Bu) and the New Shanghainese Club (Xin Shanghai Ren Zhi Jia). The Sisters Club was organized by the Women's Federation in Pengpu Xincun Street. It is a home for non-Shanghainese women who married Shanghainese men. Back in 1996 and 1997, the Sisters Club was founded after the Women's Federation offered a series of programs for migrant wives, such as a Shanghai dialect program, a housekeeping program, and a nursing program. The aim of this club is to support migrant wives in learning new living skills and their new way of life, and in sharing their difficulties in Shanghai and gradually adapting to the modern Shanghai life. The participants meet together on the last Wednesday of the month.

I interviewed Fan and Hong (see Table 4.2) about their learning experiences at the Sisters Club at the Pengpu Xincun Community Affair Center. Both of them said they had very happy married lives. Fan is in her 30s and is a housewife. In 1998, she got her two-year college degree from a famous university in Shanghai, and in 2000 she married a Shanghainese, a small business owner. She has a brother working in a university in Shanghai. She was regretful that she did not try her best to find a job after she graduated, partly because she thought she had someone on whom she could depend, her brother and her husband. She was thinking of starting a small business with her husband in the near future.

Hong, a shop assistant, is in her 40s and has a senior middle school degree. She worked in the hospitals and in the factories in her hometown, Hubei province. In 2000, she came to Shanghai to reunite with her husband. She did not want to talk more about how she met her husband. She looked like a very cheerful woman and felt very proud of improving herself and her social position by participating in the different learning programs provided in the local community. She said she would like to learn more, make more money, and travel more in the future.

The New Shanghainese Club was organized by the Linfen Community Education and Culture Center. It was originally called "Migrant Workers' Club" and was organized for the migrant workers working in the construction sites. In the 1990s, Linfen was a desolate area that connected the urban and rural areas. In 1992, many of the construction teams came to Linfen Street and built the new Linfen. In the evening, the workers in the construction sites had nothing better to do than sleep, or hang out. The Linfen Community Education and Culture Center decided to organize this Migrant Workers' Club and provided some culture activities for these migrant workers. In 2000s, when more and more well-educated non-Shanghainese rushed into

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Shanghai and made more and more money, Shanghainese gradually became more tolerant of migrants and began calling them "New Shanghainese." The name of this Club was also changed to the "New Shangnese Club." The Club provides readings, holiday parties, cultural activities such as dragon and lion dances, entertainment activities, and social meetings for the migrant workers in order for them to have healthy and happy lives in Shanghai.

I interviewed Chan and Shen (see Table 4.4) at their very simple homes. They are both cleaners in the local residential neighborhoods in Linfen Street. Chan, a senior middle school graduate, is in his 40s and temporarily lives with his brother in a small room that has two beds and some living utensils. Shen, a junior middle school graduate, is in his late 20s and now temporarily lives with his wife and his newborn baby in the local neighborhood in a spacious room that was once a storage room. Shen's room had a TV, a bed, a table and some necessary living items. Shen's living condition seems better than Chan's. They both recalled their happy learning experiences in this Club in 1997, especially their great interest in one of the activities provided by the Club: the dragon/lion dance. However, they both felt discouraged about their future because of the higher consumption expenses and the higher living pressure in Shanghai compared to the 1990s. They were dissatisfied that the Club could not continuously provide them the learning activities in which they had an interest. Currently, they did not think learning could change their living conditions. They wished they could find better jobs and make more money.

The learning cell for unemployed workers: D. N. Community Affair Center. In the early 1980s, the market reform in China pushed the labor-intensive industry to transfer to a knowledge and high-tech intensive industry, which required the employees to have a higher level of professional knowledge and skills. Those who had lower educational backgrounds, especially those who were in their 40s and 50s, were impacted by this market reform wave dramatically,

and many of them lost their jobs. These unemployed workers were called the 4050 group. In the 1990s, the business reform in Shanghai influenced the employment market. Many people who were in their 20s and 30s also lost their jobs because of the gap between their lower education backgrounds or lower working abilities and the higher requirements from the employment market. These unemployed people were called the 2030 group. Currently in Shanghai, there are mainly three types of unemployed workers: (a) 4050 people, who can keep their labor relations benefits such as work identification booklets and welfare and the health insurance in their original organizations, and can search for jobs at other organizations; (b) unmotivated people without basic working skills; and (c) the lower educated workers from the rural areas (Wang, H., personal communication, June 18, 2008).

The government supports these unemployed workers for re-employment using many strategies, including offering employment guidance and free or low priced-training programs, creating small business incubators for unemployed workers, exploring the potential employment opportunities, and creating extra employment openings for unemployed workers. The Labor Divisions of the Community Affair Centers in Shanghai collaborate with the training centers, the community schools, the enterprises, and the neighborhood committees to create more employment opportunities for unemployed workers (Wang, H. personal communication, June 18, 2008).

The D. N. Community Affair Center (pseudonymous name), like the other Community Affair Centers in Shanghai, mainly provides public and social security services for the local community. The Labor Division of this center provides employment information and services to the unemployed workers in the D. N. Street. Hu, Xun, Wan, and Sun worked in the state-owned enterprises before they lost their jobs. Xunn, Hu, and Li are among the 4050 people who lost

their jobs in the market reform wave. Sun is in his 30s and was one of the 2030 people who lost their jobs because of the business reform in Shanghai in the 1990s. Later, supported by the neighborhood committees in the D. N. Street, Hu, Xun, Wan, and Sun were hired at low salaries by the D.N. Community Affairs Center. I interviewed the four of them at their workplace. Considering their ages, Xun, Hu, and Wan were happy about their current stable working positions, though the salaries were low. Sun, however, had much higher pressures such as having a family and the desire to raise his social position. He looked forward to learning a new skill and finding a new job with a higher salary. Table 4.2 above summarizes the detailed information about the four unemployed workers.

Shanghai H.B. Power Co. and Shanghai X.Y. Trans. Co.(pseudonymous names) I selected four white-collar workers and four leaders (managers and directors) from two enterprises. One is a state-owned company, Shanghai H.B. Power Co.; the other is a private enterprise, Shanghai X.Y. Trans Co.. Starting from 1978, China has launched economic reform and, correspondingly, the enterprise reforms. The unitary state-owned planed enterprises were gradually transformed to the multiple types of enterprises following market economic rules and modern enterprise rules. After 1984, the pilots of the stock companies were launched, and stock enterprises had legitimacy to exist. After 1987, some of the small state-owned enterprises were transformed into collective or private enterprises. In 1990s, the state-owned enterprises were required to follow the rules of the modern enterprise and to establish the modern enterprise system (Shen, 2008). Shanghai H.B. Power Co. and Shanghai X.Y. Trans. Co. experienced the economic reform and the enterprise reforms. They are aiming to increase their market shares by improving their employees' competitive abilities.

The Shanghai H.B. Power Co., with 561 employees in 2006, is one of the branch companies of the national power system, which traditionally is a state monopolistic field. The Shanghai H.B. Power Co. has a very powerful training and learning system for its employees. In 2002, the company was called on to build a learning organization focusing on the discourse of *To be a top international enterprise* (Wang, Jia, & Huang, 2006). The Shanghai H.B. Power Co. motivates group learning and suggests the professional groups such as the power design group, the power transformation group, and the power sales group as the professional learning units. The learning in these professional groups is open and intersecting: anyone can learn in one professional group or another. The good ideas are optimized into proposals and shared with the other groups or even with the other organizations (Wang, T., interviewed in July 2, 2008). The company also integrated the traditional enterprise culture into the culture of the learning organization. For example, safety is crucial for the company. The Shanghai H.B. Power Co. organized a series of activities to strengthen its employees' sense of safety in their work, such as a safety knowledge competition, a safety technique competition, safety slogans, etc., all of which is integrated into the discourse of "safety power culture," and gradually becomes one part of the learning organization culture. I visited this company several times, and I could feel the strong atmosphere of "safety." For example, without the permissions of the gatekeepers, a stranger can hardly step into the administrative building of this power company.

I interviewed three white-collar workers—Lang, Hao, Yan, who are all young professionals in the different technical divisions (see Table 4.2). I also interviewed Lian, the general secretary of the Youth League Branch, and Chau, the director of the Administration Dept. (see Table 4.2). All of these participants from the Shanghai H.B. Power Co. were very knowledgeable about their work and looked very smart and well-trained.

The Shanghai X.Y. Trans Co. is a private transportation company, dealing with road and traffic maintenance, repair, and development. In 2008, it had 249 employees, including 17% migrant workers. It was nominated by the Shanghai Adult Education Association as one of the 2005-2006 learning organization models. The company emphasizes group learning and training activities provided to its migrant workers, using the learning strategies such as: technique competition activities, activities for generating technical ideas, and problem-oriented reading activities. To motivate the employees to learn, the company signs a learning contract with the employees every year, organizes the technicians to do research work to solve technical problems, and compiles good learning experiences, technical achievements, and employees' awards into the annual collections of group learning. The leaders mainly attended the learning activities organized by the Shanghai General Labor Union. The learning activities for the leaders include such things as the reading activity, management and policy seminars, conferences, visit to other organizations, etc. Unlike the Shanghai H.B. Power Co., one of the national monopoly stated-owned enterprises possessing rich physical resources and a sophisticated group learning system, the Shanghai X.Y. Trans Co. as a private enterprise is more like a grassroots organization striving hard to accumulate its physical wealth and to build its learning system, combining individual learning and group learning. I interviewed one white-collar worker, Gu, who is a very young professional technician responsible for the engineering project (see Table 4.2). He learned from his practical work and participated in the learning activities organized by the company. I also interviewed two middle-aged leaders, Zun, manager of the Administration Dept., and Yu, director of the Engineering Dept. (see Table 4.2). Zun mainly participated in the learning activities organized by the Shanghai General Labor Union, and Yu learned by himself and

learned from his professional colleagues and friends at the universities, research institutions, and professional associations.

In summary, in this section I described each of these nine learning cells, their histories, their characteristics, and their learning strategies. Within each cell, I briefly introduced its participants, their life experiences and their learning experiences before and after they joined the learning cells in the Zhabei Learning Community.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the Zhabei District, its history, the development features and how it embraces these unique developmental features in its learning activities to promote a lifelong learning community. Generally speaking, the Zhabei Learning Community employs multiple strategies to promote a lifelong learning community, such as establishing multiple networks from the top down, nurturing the non-governmental learning cells from the grassroots, connecting learning with community development; exploring new learning programs through experimental projects; and situating learning in the local social resources and cultural and historical heritages.

In this chapter, I also described the sub-cases: nine learning cells, their histories, their characteristics, and their learning strategies. I briefly introduced 20 participants selected from the nine learning cells, their life experiences and their learning experiences before and after they joined the learning cells.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Findings are reported and presented based on each of the four research questions guiding

this study. For the first question, the patterns of knowledge construction, there are five patterns

of knowledge construction generated from 20 interviews: radiation, circulation, simulation,

socialization, and contextualization. For the second question, the socio-cultural factors that shape

the knowledge construction, findings include political bureaucracy, economic reform, and

traditional Chinese culture such as respecting authority, discourses of age and face, and

moderation. For the third question, the learning community factors that shape knowledge

construction, findings include government support, learning activities connecting to community

development, harmonious learning environment, comprehensive learning networks, and lineal

and non-lineal learning structures. The fourth research question concerned how social-cultural

factors and learning community factors together shape the knowledge construction. Findings

related to this research question are merged with findings for questions two and three. Findings

are summarized in table 5.1.

Patterns of Knowledge Construction

Five patterns of knowledge construction were generated from an analysis of data from 20

interviewees: radiation, circulation, simulation, socialization, and contextualization.

Radiation

Radiation is energy that travels through space and spreads from a source to others. In

knowledge construction process, the pattern of radiation refers to how knowledge is shared

Table 5.1. *Overview of the findings*

Research questions and the themes

1. What are the patterns of knowledge construction in the learning community?

- **Radiation:** Knowledge is constructed by emphasizing how knowledge is shared among learners and proliferated from individuals to the public through various tools.

- **Circulation:** Knowledge is constructed by emphasizing how people gain certain knowledge by interacting with the multiple dimensions of this knowledge.

- **Simulation:** Knowledge is constructed by emphasizing how people gain knowledge suitably analogous through a process of observation, imitation and adaptation.

- **Socialization:** Knowledge is constructed by emphasizing how people gain certain knowledge required by a new context by being involved in the changed socio-cultural context, being shaped by it, and finally, by adapting to it.

- **Contextualization:** Knowledge is constructed by emphasizing how people gain new knowledge by situating the knowledge in the local authentic context as a form of local knowledge, and then generating the local knowledge to explicit/public knowledge.

2. What are the social-cultural factors that shape knowledge construction in the learning community? And how?

- **Authority:** Blocking of grassroots knowledge
- **Discourse of Age:** Decreasing learners' motivation to learn and to share knowledge
- **Discourse of Face:** Blocking of peer knowledge and constraining knowledge sharing
- **Moderation:** Ignoring the heterogeneous knowledge and cutting-edge knowledge
- **Political Bureaucracy:** Learners' not being able to pursue knowledge deeply and persistently and losing their trust and interest in the Learning Community
- **Economic reform:** challenging the traditional idea of "authority", stimulating the grassroots knowledge, and enabling the learners to explore local knowledge; constraining some learners' willingness to share their tacit knowledge due to market competition

3. What are the learning community factors that shape knowledge construction in the learning community? And how?

- **Government support**: Promoting collaboration among the stakeholders; bureaucracy
- **Connection with community development**: Radiating knowledge and increasing community cohesion
- **Harmonious learning environment**: Strengthening group cohesion and building trust
- **Comprehensive learning networks**: stimulating knowledge collaboration
- **Lineal and Non-lineal learning structures**: promoting knowledge proliferation and radiation

among learners and proliferated from the individual learners to the public through various tools

(see Figure 5.1). In figure 5.1, the dots in the middle circle refer to the individual knowledge in

its learning cells. The outer circles refer to the local community and other outside communities.

The pattern of radiation in this figure shows how knowledge is proliferated from the individual

learners to the public.
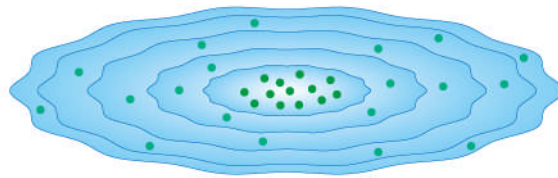
Figure 5.1. Radiation

Among others, Jiang and Lin all mentioned how their learning "radiated" to others in the

community. For example, the description from Lin, the team leader of the Ground Calligraphy

Salon, indicates how the knowledge of ground calligraphy was expanded from the individuals to

the public:

> Bo: You mentioned that you also traveled to other parks in Shanghai?
> Lin: Yeah. Everywhere in Shanghai, to Pudong [One part of Shanghai].
> Bo: You wrote in front of the parks?
> Lin: Yeah.
> Bo: What happened then, after you wrote?
> Lin: Our writing caused an immediate reaction from the public. Some people asked me if I could be their children's mentor. I said " It's too far from my residence." But I have several students now.
> Bo: I know that your ground calligraphy group also performed for non-profit events. I guess there must have been many interesting stories.
> Lin: Ha-ha, yeah. Too many. For example, some Chinese from England, America, and Canada told me: "Oh, Old Mr., we saw you on TV. Oh, you are writing here. You look much better than you do on TV." Our activities were also reported in the newspaper. Some foreigners asked me to teach them how to write. Now, I am the mentor of a student from America. She loves the Chinese language and Chinese culture and she asked me to be her mentor.

Here, Lin himself and his members extended their learning circle not only to people from a larger area in Shanghai and to people from other parts of China, but also to people from other countries as well. Lin said: "It does not matter if your calligraphy is good or not. The most important thing is that you can make friends. When I saw them (people passing by the parks), I always asked them to write. It is good." Lin wrote calligraphy and asked the people who were interested in calligraphy to write together. On June 3, 2008, I observed the Ground Calligraphy activity in front of the Zhabei Park. I saw some calligraphers writing down some traditional Chinese classic poems and the traditional Hundred Family Names, compiled in the Song Dynasty by a scholar who put the most commonly used family names such as "Zhao, Qian, Sun, Li" in China on this list (Zhang & Shen, 2006). One calligrapher asked the people passing by the park to write on the ground. Some people did write and bought calligraphy brushes to practice(see Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3). Ground calligraphy is like a bridge that connects learners and the public together.

Figure 5.2. Ground calligraphy writing   *Figure 5.3*. Ground calligraphy writing rules [8]

The members from the Baoshan Photograph Salon in the Zhabei district extended their individual knowledge to the local community and served the local community. Like any other

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[8]   Both pictures were taken by the author in 2008 at the Shanghai Zhabei Park.

interest-based learning activities for elderly people, Baoshan Photograph Salon provided a

communication platform for the elderly who have interest in photograph to share their

photographic knowledge and skills. In order to improve their skills, the members of the Salon

organize a photography exhibition every year in the local community, which attracts the local

people, too. Jiang, the team leader of the Baoshan photography Salon, further told me how they

use their cameras to serve the disadvantaged people in the community and radiated their

individual knowledge to the local community:

> Jiang: We took pictures. Whenever we were informed there are activities, we
>   would go to take pictures.
> Bo: Is this for free?
> Jiang: Yes, it's free. There are some single and lonely elderly people in the streets, we took
>   pictures for them. On Double Ninth Festival, we took pictures for them. Sometimes
>   we went there voluntarily. There are many of such activities [in the local
>   community].
>   ……
> Bo: So this is to extend the art to social service. What else?
> Jiang: Single and lonely people, we took pictures for them. We also went to the street
>   welfare houses. Some people's health condition is not good, some are living alone,
>   some are single…we took pictures for them, too.
> Bo: How do you think this could help the community?
> Jiang: This shows the care and love from the community…
> Bo: You mainly focus on the disadvantaged groups?
> Jiang: We took some pictures to show society's care and compassion for them.

Here, the members of the Salon practiced their photography skills by photographing the

everyday life of the disadvantaged people, and the disadvantaged got opportunities to enjoy the

pictures taken by the members of the salon. The Photography Salon even broke the pure art

function of the photograph and used the photograph as a medium to transfer the message of

societal love and care to the disadvantaged people in the local community. Jiang further told me

how they extended the social functions of the photographs and used photographs as tools to save

and to reinterpret the historical heritages and the local events, and to transfer those heritages to

the people in or outside of the local community:

Photographing is mainly to take pictures, right? To take pictures, you need to have your objects. Our objects are street activities. Besides, we went out to see if there was some road construction and gained some documents. For example, building demolition, we took some pictures and saved them as documents. In 2006, for example, in the New Year, some people could not go back [to their hometown]. The streets organized a small opera. We took some pictures. They could not go back to their home, but they could mail some pictures back home.

Here, we can see that the members of the Salon deposited the historical heritages and the local meaningful events into their pictures, with their own artful angles. These knowledge products could be transferred to the family members of these migrants and the public, and could be reused later as historical documents. Jiang said that they focused on the local community and used their cameras to shoot the pictures and to transfer the beautiful pictures, the love, and the care to the local community, and even to the people outside of the community.

A migrant who married a Shanghainese, Hong from the Sisters Club, in retrospect, excitedly described her special experience of learning the Shanghai dialect and how this learning experience was broadcast via television, which encouraged her and influenced the other migrant women to learn:

Hong: I had been on TV twice before. [Oh] The migrant wives, on TV! Last time when we learnt Shanghai dialect, before the New Year, [they] cared about us, and then we were on TV. Another time, it was organized by the Women's Federation. There's an interview, and we were on TV.
Bo: Mainly about your experience of how to learn Shanghai Dialect?
Hong: Yes. They asked how long we learnt Shanghai dialect.
Bo: With Shanghai dialect?
Hong: Yes, some of them used Shanghai dialect to interview [us].
Bo: How did this experience help you to learn Shanghai dialect?
Hong: [Laugh]: I said I had never been on TV in my hometown, but on TV here. Last time it is so funny, that the TV makers were making TV programs, and after we were done, someone came and said, OH, you've become a big Star!
….
Bo: What influence do you think this experience had on you?
Hong: I felt my social status increased. [Laugh], I myself felt so happy in my heart.
Bo: To work harder in the future.
Hong: Yes, later I would learn more knowledge, make more money, and travel, all are good.

As a migrant married to a Shanghainese, Hong for the first time had the opportunity to show herself on TV because of her learning experience, which significantly influenced her view about the future. To learn Shanghai dialect is not just learning a survival skill in the competitive Shanghai society. Through the medium of TV, Hong realized how important knowledge could be in her development process. She felt that knowledge could change her social status and support her to increase her quality of life. Hong 's learning experience is not only a meaningful individual activity, it was broadcast on TV and shared with the public, and motivated more and more migrants to follow her as a good model:

Bo: What value has this experience for your work?
Hong: Some migrants saw this, [they said], OH, this migrant wife could get a job, increase her salary, and increase her social status after she learned, learned very hard the skills. Today many [migrants] want to follow me. I said let me see first and see if I can bring you here later.
Bo: You became a model.
Hong: [Laugh]. We are gorgeous!

Many migrant workers in China do not have ambitious dreams for their futures. Living in a big city like Shanghai, they work hard all their lives doing physical work with low pay. Hong's story about how her learning experience changed her life was broadcast on TV and influenced other migrants, too. Some migrants realized how important knowledge and skills could be in improving their lives and would like to follow Hong as a model.

The three examples above show how individual learning not only enriched the individual learners' lives, it also radiated to the public and became a collective activity that influenced the other people in or outside of the local community. Cultural products such as ground calligraphy, newspapers, photographs, and TV played an important role in "radiating" new beliefs and the new knowledge from individuals to the public. This radiating process bonded the individuals and the public together and created an atmosphere of trust and harmony in the local community.

Circulation

Like the movement of blood through the vessels, circulation is a movement through a circuit. The pattern of circulation in knowledge construction follows a similar movement. That is, in the knowledge construction process, circulation emphasizes how people gain certain knowledge by interacting with the multiple dimensions of this knowledge, which is vividly shown in figure 5.4.   In figure 5.4, the dots refer to the multiple dimensions of the knowledge. The arrows refer to the process of going through every dimension of the knowledge. Each dimension presents a mini-knowledge base of this particular knowledge.
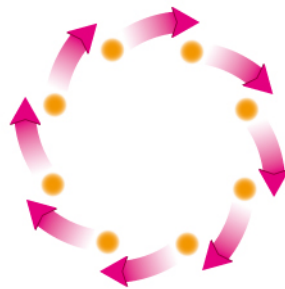
Figure 5.4. Circulation

Learning experiences from 10 participants show that this pattern occurred in their learning cells. This pattern was evident in the activity of travelling around Shanghai by the migrant workers. In the Zhabei Community, the government organized the free One-day-Shanghai-trip for the migrant workers as part of the activities to get the migrants involved in Shanghai life. This trip provided a good opportunity for the migrant workers to know Shanghai from different angles. Hong, from the Sisters Club, described how she learned about Shanghai through this type of one-day trip:

> Bo: Tell me about your one-day trip in Shanghai.
> Hong: Very happy. [Laugh]. Cause for the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall, we
>   common people, who would go there? They [the Women's Federation] organized
>   this trip for us. We saw this city, OH, so big! We saw its development, what it
>   looked like before, and what it looked like now. Later we went to the Century

Park, and the Bund Sightseeing Tunnel.

Bo: What impressed you most in this trip?

Hong: The Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall. We know what Shanghai looked like in the past and nowadays. Now, such a big change, and it becomes the national big city. [Laugh] So I felt I was involved in Shanghai, too. Shanghai is so beautiful!

Bo: It is worth it to come to Shanghai.

Hong: Yes, I felt my decision to come to Shanghai is right. It makes me love Shanghai much more, doesn't it? Shanghai is really good. My Laogong [Husband] also told me: Shanghai is a big city.

          …

Bo: Your husband also took you to visit Shanghai. What's the difference?

Hong: It's for sure that my Laogong only took me to randomly have a look. But here someone interpreted [the history] to us, and so you know Shanghai's history. This is a meaningful activity. Later, one elderly woman from our Salon wrote a poem to summarize our trip.

Bo: What did you get from this trip?

Hong: I feel it is so meaningful, and I'm very happy, to be together with these [migrant] sisters.

Bo: This kind of atmosphere must be very good.

Hong: Oh, yes. For example, this one-day trip, my Laogong may not bring me to some places, but now they took us to places like the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall.

Bo: This enlarged your horizons.

Hong: Yes, we got to know Shanghai much better. Like our family, my Laogong is a taxi driver and can take me to some places. Some [migrant wives] have never been there. When they saw it [the Bund Sightseeing Tunnel], that really opened [their] eyes! That Bund Sightseeing Tunnel, they have never seen it. They saw it, oh, it looks like this way. [They] all felt so surprised!

This one-day trip enabled these migrant workers to imbibe Shanghai's history and also the facts about modern Shanghai by visiting different areas of Shanghai. Every area of Shanghai, such as the Bund Sightseeing Tunnel and the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall embodies one particular knowledge base of Shanghai. For example, the Bund Sightseeing Tunnel represents the high technology and the modern style of the metropolitan Shanghai; the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall deposits the historical track of Shanghai—the document of how Shanghai changed from a small fishing village to a famous metropolitan city. These sights are like living knowledge that is directly and strongly presented in front of these migrants, who seldom have opportunities to go into the society of Shanghai. More important is that the

organizers connected this entertainment trip together with a purposeful selection of the sights

representing Shanghai and also a detailed interpretation of the sights. This enabled the migrants

to understand the background knowledge of Shanghai better.

Shen, a male migrant worker who attended the New Shanghainese Club, told me how the

Dragon Dance, one part of their activities in the club, brought him to different places in

Shanghai, which increased his knowledge about Shanghai and his confidence in living in

Shanghai:

> Bo: Why did you have a great interest in dragon dance?
> Shen: Comparatively, we could see more of the outside world. For example, the big
>   exhibitions in the Pudong new area, they exhibited different stuff, the size of the
>   exhibition is very big. Sometimes, they exhibited cars, sometimes, faucet, and
>   tools.
>   …
> Shen: We went to Pudong Shangri-La. Too.
> Bo: That really opened your eyes.
> Shen: Yes. At that time, we were invited by a boss from Wenzhou to celebrate the
>   opening ceremony of his enterprise.
> Bo: Oh, that is beyond the 50 R.M.B.[Chinese currency] that he paid to you.
> Shen: Even if he did not pay me, I still wanted to go. For our migrant workers, we
>   may never have such an opportunity in our lives to visit it there. The security check
>   was really strict, we had to show our ID…That day, the mayor attended the
>   activity. It was really a great honor for us.
> Bo: This may not directly help your work, but at least it enlarged your vision of
>   the world.
> Shen: Definitely. When we first stepped into this city, we totally got lost.
>   Sometimes we felt scared. Mainly because we have never stepped out of our
>   hometown.
> Bo: So dragon dancing is a process of becoming familiar with the Shanghai society.
> Shen: Yes. Every area in Pudong is different. I went around all of the
>   construction sites.

For Shen, dragon dance as a tool enabled him to visit different places such as the luxurious

hotels, to attend the exhibitions such as car exhibitions, and to have the honor to experience the

social life that the upper class society enjoyed. These experiences of traveling around different

places and experiencing the social life of Shanghai, with the dragon dance as an interaction tool,

provided the migrant workers with different profiles of Shanghai, or the multiple mini-

knowledge base of Shanghai. Through the process of "circulating" around the different parts of Shanghai that the migrant workers have never been to, migrant workers like Shen not only know Shanghai better but increased their confidence in their ability to be involved into a metropolitan area that was once far away from their familiar world.

Wan vividly described how she learned a whole package of employment policy through dealing with an important and complicated employment case. In this case, Wan said that she and her colleagues recommended that a prisoner be released from prison to work at a gas station. The gas station hired this man but did not pay for his welfare due to his previous prison experience. After checking the relevant policy on this special issue, Wan and her colleagues asked that gas station to pay the man welfare. Later, the man fell on the ground at work, and it was discovered that he had brain cancer. The gas station refused to reimburse his huge medical expenses since they did not consider the situation to be a real work-related accident. After visiting the relevant experts who were familiar with the policy on employment accidents and with medicine, Wan and his colleagues got enough evidence to urge the gas station to pay the man's medical expenses. This case was like a knowledge database of employment policies covering most of the relevant policies. After checking all of the relevant policies, visiting the relevant experts and institutions, and going through every dimension of this complicated employment case, Wan said she had gained a systematic knowledge of employment policies.

The above examples show that this pattern is especially useful for gaining certain knowledge from engaging in its multiple dimensions. Each dimension is like a mini-knowledge base through which learners gradually make sense of the knowledge.

Simulation

Simulation is the technique of imitating something in a suitably analogous situation. In the knowledge construction process, simulation emphasizes how people gain knowledge suitably analogous through a process of observation, imitation, and adaptation. In order to understand how this pattern works, I hypothesize the knowledge being simulated has four components: 1, 2, 3, 4. In figure 5.5, 1, 2, 3 and 4 on the left refer to a whole package of knowledge that is imitated. 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the right refer to a whole package of the simulated knowledge. The arrow refers to the process of observation, imitation, and adaptation.
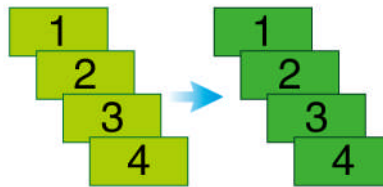
Figure 5.5. Simulation

The pattern of simulation occurred in the learning cells that 13 participants attended. These 13 participants come from nearly every group except the migrant group. Some participants simulated knowledge from daily life and people around them, some from the peer learners. Qiong, from the Fashion Show program, mentioned how he learned the catwalk by observing the walks of others in daily life and simulated the beautiful walks from daily life he observed in his catwalk:

Qiong: Another important source of knowledge is from one's perception.
Bo: How?
Qiong: Observation. Observe people walking in the street. Oh, this person walked so elegantly, and his walk looks very nice. Why? How can I walk that way? I want to learn from him.
Bo: But the way one walks on the catwalk is different from how one walks in real life.
Qiong: They are both very similar. The catwalk is more exaggerated. The real catwalk is simulated from life, and is refined and improved.

This example indicates that Qiong interacted with life and simulated and adapted (refined and improved) the analogous knowledge of elegant daily-life walks into his catwalk.

Chau's work is mainly dealing with people. He is an administrative official in the Shanghai H.B. Power Co. He purposely talked with different types of people to train his sense of human relations through observing the languages people use, their body languages, and their different reactions to the same issues. He also mentioned how he imitated plots from TV and adapted them in his practical work. He said: "TV serial programs usually analyze people's psychology. About how the actors react, you and the director may think differently. You may find one reaction the director set in a plot is perfect. You need to think about it." Chau not only observed the reactions of real people, he also incorporated the reactions of TV actors. Then he told me he connected his work with what he observed, imitated the strategies used in interactions by those he observed, and adapted these strategies in his work.

Sun, who once lost his job working at a restaurant and then was employed by the D. N. Community Affairs Center as an employment assistant, mentioned how he learned his professional knowledge by observing the mentor who was assigned to him:

Sun: I had an internship in employment policy. There's a window, and you can learn by sitting beside [a mentor]…My mentor was at the downstairs windows, window No. 7. He worked inside, and I observed how he dealt with his work by sitting beside him. Then I tried to help him to deal with some issues. Gradually, one or two months later, I learned [how to work in this window].
Bo: Then if you have some questions, you asked him.
Sun: Yes.
Bo: Before your observation, was there someone who told you the basic procedures of how to work in this window?

Sun: Yes, my mentor told me.

Sun familiarized himself with his new job by first observing how his mentor dealt with the work, then he tried to imitate his mentor by giving him a little help. Before his observation, he was

informed of the general procedures of the new job, which helped him understand the general components of the knowledge he imitated. After a period of observation, imitation, and trial/adaption, he gradually internalized the new knowledge.

Yang and Qiong mentioned that they improved their professional skills by observing the other professional teams and adapting those skills to fit in their own situations. For example, Qiong said that after he observed the catwalks of the elderly people from the Jing'an District, he finally understood why he could not make a good turn in the catwalk. He showed me the improved turn he learned from that group by walking in front of me. He said everyone is different; the instructor could only give you general rules about the walk, which sometimes might not fit some learners. Observing other groups' catwalks as an audience enabled him to see clearly what steps (components) he missed. In order for the learners to see what steps they were missing in observation, Qiong said that learners should have accumulated a similar level of knowledge that the observed groups have. That is, the knowledge gap between the observees and the observers should not be so huge. Yang's experience reflected this point. She said that she had a very good imitative ability. However, sometimes she still could not understand why some chorus groups could perform very well on some steps, possibly the result of her misinterpreting some steps and imitating those steps, moving her in a wrong direction.

Communication is important for the learners to simulate the new knowledge. However, not everyone wants to share his or her special knowledge with others through communication. Yang told me that because of the yearly competitive evaluation of the chorus groups in the Zhabei District, the chorus groups in the same communities rarely communicate with each other. That is why they had to learn from the other groups through observation. Hu's and Gu's experiences provided an example of how to deal with this competitive issue. Hu told me that it is

no problem for her to communicate with the colleagues from other streets because they are from different organizations and there is no competition among them. Gu said that his mentor was willing to show him some of his tacit knowledge because Gu and his mentor were not the same type of professionals. They had complementary knowledge and they felt comfortable with "imitating" each other. Chau provided another choice for this issue. He said in order for the mentors to communicate voluntarily to their colleagues their special tacit knowledge, Shanghai H.B. Power Co. would reward the mentors when their apprentices gain the special knowledge and skills, and would cut the mentors' bonuses if their apprentices work poorly. Usually, the mentors were much older than the apprentices and were near retirement. Thus, they would feel comfortable sharing what they have without feeling threatened. Chau also used his experience to indicate that trust, respect, and love are important factors that enable the mentors to show the apprentices their tacit knowledge. He said, "I treated my mentor like my father, and he treated me like his son. What father would not like to tell his son the special skills he has ? "

The examples above show that some learners simulated new knowledge from their colleagues and their mentors and others simulated new knowledge from interacting with daily life and people around them. Learners simulated new knowledge mainly through a process of observation, imitation, and adaption to their own situations. In order to simulate every component of the knowledge efficiently, communication is important. Without communication, some learners may misinterpret some components of the simulated knowledge.

Socialization

According to Parke and Buriel (1998), socialization is "the process whereby an individual's standards, skills, motives, attitudes, and behaviors change to conform to those regarded as desirable and appropriate for his or her present and future role in any particular

society" (463). Similar to this definition, in the knowledge construction process, socialization emphasizes how people are involved in the changed socio-cultural context, molded by the mainstream directions through selectively learning certain knowledge required by the new context, and finally adapting to the new context (see Figure 5.6). In figure 5.6, the first figure with the grey color refers to the learners in their original context. The second figure refers to the learners in a changed context. That is, the influential factors (the arrows) impose on the learners and make them adapt from the original context (grey color) to a new context (brown color). When the context changes dramatically, the influential factors will become dramatic and will direct or even "force" the learners to change to a certain direction. The third figure with the brown color refers to the learners who have already adapted to a new context.

Generally speaking, everyone is socialized to fit into his/her own social context. Socialization is a process of learning the social rules and roles in society. It starts from childhood and continues whenever there is a change in life, which requires us to learn certain new knowledge, skills, and beliefs to adapt to the changed context. Interview data show that nine of my participants experienced socialization as a pattern of knowledge construction. It was especially dramatic for Hong, Shen and Sun.
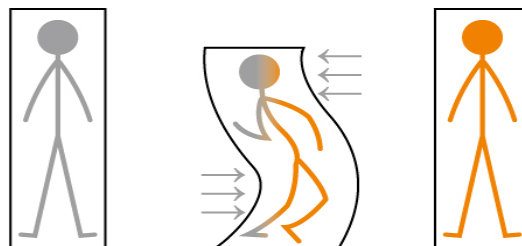
Figure 5.6. Socialization

The Zhabei Learning Community provided a series of programs to support and guide people in the local community to adapt to a changed social context. Hong and Shen described

how as migrant workers they tried to adapt to Shanghai society by joining in the learning

programs provided by the local community. Hong, a shop assistant, especially mentioned how

she used the language she learned as an important tool to help her become involved in Shanghai

society:

> Bo: What motivated you to learn the Shanghai dialect?
> Hong: Because I wanted to be involved in this society. Because you are a migrant, after all, you are a migrant, you must learn Shanghai dialect. After you learn it, things will get better.
> Bo: How?
> Hong: After learning the Shanghai dialect, I could communicate with people when I shopped, when I bought groceries in the market.
> Bo: What else motivated you to learn Shanghai dialect?
> Hong: You can bargain with the prices. When you go shopping, they hear what you say, oh, they know you are outsider, they will rip you off, and the price will be higher. They hear, hi, you speak Shanghai dialect, they will treat you better. We learned Shanghai dialect, our status in the family also increased [laugh]…Even if they know you are a migrant, they hear you are speaking Shanghai dialect, they know you stayed in Shanghai for quite a long time, and know you know some things well, he dares not cheat you, right? This is from a very practical point of view . I said: A'La [Shanghai dialect for "I am"] Shanghainese. [Laugh], pretend [to be a Shanghainese], right? Some people just want to bargain with you about the prices and [therefore] flatter you, oh, I tell you.

Shanghai society, which has developed its own institutionalized norms and culture, differentiates

those outsiders from the local Shanghainese through language—the Shanghai dialect. People

speaking the same language are included in the same cultural community and share the similar

tacit knowledge embedded in the daily life practices. Participating in the Shanghai dialect

program and other migrant programs provided by the Sisters Club supported Hong as an outsider

to successfully become involved in the Shanghai daily life practices such as market bargaining.

She was informed about Shanghai culture and norms embedded in those daily life practices and

was proud of being one of the Shanghainese. The urge to be involved in Shanghai society, to

adapt to it and finally be accepted as one part of it, directed Hong to learn Shanghai dialect and

to use the new language as a tool to reframe her new social roles and positions in Shanghai.

However, not every learning program aimed at socialization turned out to have a positive result. At the beginning, Shen, a migrant worker, was motivated to adapt to Shanghai life by participating in the learning activities provided by the New Shanghainese Club. The Club provided activities such as participating in community volunteer work and visiting many places in Shanghai through performing the dragon dance. All of these activities revealed to him a positive side of Shanghai society, and he formed a good impression about the leaders in community. However, one year later, he found out that they were invited to attend the learning activities only when the administrative leaders came to visit the community. Other than that, the migrant learners were totally ignored. He lost his trust in the leaders and his interest in these activities. His negative impression of the traditional bureaucracy came to his mind again after he experienced some of the bureaucratic learning activities, which washed away the good image of Shanghai he had through a series of previous socialized activities. Basically, his socialization process backfired.

Some participants did not get enough support from the local community about what knowledge they should learn in order to adapt to the changed society and got lost in the socialization process. Sun, who worked for nine years at one company before the 1992 business reform in Shanghai, told me how he was passively pushed and shaped by the quick social changes from 1992 until now:

> Sun: According to my personality, I wanted to work [within one field] until I became old. You see, I worked at X. L. Company for nine years.
> Bo: Then why did you job-hop?
> Sun: The national system reform [1992 business reform].
> Bo: When?
> Sun: In 1992. at that time, there's a reform. Those who worked for less than ten years were totally laid-off , no matter whether you were excellent or not...1992 was a big social change, a turning point…Then it became…these recent two years, [the reform step] became quicker and quicker, like a wheel, it started to turn from 1992, and is turning quicker and quicker until now.

Before 1992, Sun enjoyed a stable career at one company. Like many other Shanghainese of his

age, he did not think it necessary to get a college degree. After 1992, he was laid-off due to the

business reforms in Shanghai and attempted to adapt to the changed society blindly. He worked

for one and a half years at a real estate company run by a friend, then left to help his brother run

an international business for one and a half years. He felt that he was not a business-type person

and thought he was a loser and felt very bad about accepting free food from his brother. Then he

job-hopped again and worked for N.J. Restaurant for a half year. He felt he was drifting along

the flood of the reforms and could not find his own position in society. He told me, "It is not

what I want to do, but what I can do," which vividly describes the aimlessness of his attempt to

adapt to the new society. He said, "It is just not that smooth. When you walk towards this

direction, it seems there's something missing, walk that way, another thing is missing too,"

indicating that he could not figure out the whole picture of the changed society and what kind of

knowledge he was missing. He tried hard to search for a job and found that a college degree is a

bottom-line requirement to find a better job. He decided to get a college degree in Chinese

language and literature. After he graduated, he found that professional certificates became very

important in order to find a good job. He could not find the key to adapt to the changed society:

> Sun: For example, the drivers need a driving license, a financers need finance
> certificate. There is much many professional work that you cannot do [without
> a license].
> …
> Sun: what you learned, you must work in that field, you cannot jump out of that field.
> Bo: Do you plan to follow these requirements [to get licenses]?
> Sun: I must pass the tests…I feel nowadays, to find a job, you must pass many tests. For
> example, one of my classmates found a job in one company, he was trained for three
> months, and must pass a lot of stuff. I have no idea what kind of tests, but you must
> pass all of the tests in order to get this job.

Social reforms disrupted Sun's stable life and his previous knowledge base. He was unwillingly

drawn into the changed society, tried very hard to dance to the rhythms of the social changes,

changed his jobs from one field to another, and finally after many trials and failures, he realized the importance of degrees and certificates in the job search process. However, he still did not have much of a clear idea about how to improve himself to keep up with the tempo of the changing society. He did not find out what kind of knowledge or skills he needs to fulfill in order to adapt to the changed society. He could not find his new position in society after the business reforms and could not adapt to the changed society successfully. Basically, he lost his way in his socialization process.

The soul of the socialization process is just as Shen described, "It's like this community I stay in, something you can only get to know after you experience it." That is, you need to be involved in a context, and to feel it. The examples from Shen and Sun further indicate that consistent and positive professional supports are necessary to guide learners to learn certain knowledge and to successfully adapt to the changed contexts.

Contextualization

Contextualization is a process of situate information into context. I define the pattern of contextualization as a process of gaining new knowledge by situating the knowledge in the local authentic context as a form of local knowledge, and then generating explicit/public knowledge from the local knowledge. In figure 5.7, the left side refers to the knowledge imbedded in the local authentic context; the right side refers to the explicit knowledge generated from the local authentic context. The arrow refers to the process of gaining new knowledge in the local context and transforming the local knowledge into explicit/public knowledge.

Learning experiences from eight participants, including Hu, Hong, Wan, Lang, Hao,Yan , Yu, and Lian, showed that the pattern of contextualization occurred in their learning cells. Chau,

Lian, Yan, and Wan told me that their learning cells used real cases as learning resources to learn

certain knowledge. Instead of reciting dry welfare policies, Wan and her colleagues learned the
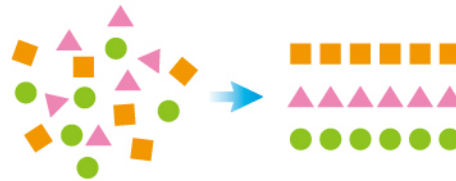
Figure 5.7. Contextualization.

policies from actual cases drawn from their practical work. The practical issues about welfare

occurring in their daily work context were woven into a role-playing game. Then, Wan and her

colleagues engaged in and reacted to those issues in the game and learned the explicit knowledge

about welfare policies. For example, Wan told me how she and her colleagues learn welfare

policies from real cases:

> Bo: Where did these cases come from?
> Wan: Refined from real life.
> Bo: The trainer demonstrated the game to you or ask you to play?
> Wan: He demonstrates to us, and then asked us to play. It's really so vivid, and
>   two of us played very well. Actually, these things do happen in our practical
>   work.

The QC (Quality Control) system of the Shanghai H.B. Power Co. encourages its different

professional groups to explore new techniques and new methods to improve their work through

the form of the projects. Hao, the white-collar worker, described how the QC system encourages

all of the technicians to explore the best technical solutions in their practice:

> Every year, our company has a QC achievement publication…For example, we have a
> new technique, …or a project. We as a group, with over ten members, discuss how to
> do this project well using the best methods, the updated methods. For example, for the
> sales division, [the project might be] how to improve the citizens' time-divided electric
> meter, or…for the power transformation division, how to deal with the structure of the
> power switch in order to decrease its oil consumption. I feel, it is through doing
> projects that we pool the wisdom of the group. How to say…, it is a good way of

learning, and it nurtures a collaborative spirit, and at the same time, like you said, it is a process of [knowledge] innovation. …This project is not from the authorities, it is from our practical work. In our daily work, we slowly learn to do things day after day, and find a shortcut, or a somewhat [good] method. Then we want to try and see if this method is good, and can be spread [to other groups]. …We all try our best, [to figure out] what I can do [as one of the team members]. For example, I can do the statistics report. Then I will deal with the statistic data, make the forms, and compare the pre-result and post-result. [If] I am familiar with the sites, then I will go to the sites to compare the data. … Since we all work together, we know each other's strengthens…We as a group collaborate together. We will not abandon someone just because he/she has no [special]strength. It seems he/she has nothing special, but more or less, he/she has something that he/she can contribute to the group….We as groups try our best to do a thing well.

Hao's description showed how she and her professional group collaboratively explored the best solutions and methods embedded in their practical work to improve their professional work. Her professional group as a community pooled each other's wisdom, drew on each other's strengths and knowledge, and generated new knowledge together from their practical work through some kind of project. The achievement of the project was finally published in the online QC (Quality Control) system of the Shanghai H.B. Power Co. and became explicit knowledge shared with the colleagues. The whole process shows how knowledge is collectively gained from the local authentic context and is transferred to a form of explicit knowledge shared with the public.

Contextualization not only means learning new knowledge but also means creating new knowledge in the local context. Xun mainly dealt with the welfare policy issues of those Shanghainese who moved during the time of Chairman Mao, Zedong to the remote regions to support the development of those places . Xun recalled how the special issues were identified in their practical work and finally institutionalized into the new policies. He said that most of the time, he and his colleagues followed the existing policy to solve problems. However, sometimes, the real situation was more complicated and was beyond what the current policies could deal with. In those cases, with permission from their upper authorities, they adjusted the current

policies to fit the local context. Xun said that those strategies for dealing with the special issues

would be reported in one policy magazine, and some of them were accepted by the policy

makers and were included in the new policies:

> Bo: Then these strategies for dealing with these special issues may provide references for the policy?
> Xun: Yes. The policies [on this area] are also constantly adapted. For example, policies for this year are different from those of the last year.
> Bo: Adapted according to these [special] issues identified in the practice?
> Xun: Yes.

Xun's experience showed that the new knowledge was created by adapting to the specific

context. The welfare policies guided Xun and his colleagues in dealing with welfare issues.

These institutionalized policies cover the issues present in most situations. However, in some

cases, things were much more complicated, which required them to adjust the current welfare

policies to fit the local context. Adjusted knowledge about welfare policies became explicit

knowledge when it was finally included in the new welfare policies.

In summary, five patterns were generated from the learning experiences of the 20

participants: radiation, circulation, simulation, socialization, and contextualization. Radiation

emphasizes individual knowledge being proliferated to the public; circulation emphasizes

gaining the knowledge from interacting with its multiple dimensions; simulation focuses on

learning knowledge from imitating the components of knowledge and adapting the imitated

knowledge to learners' knowledge base; socialization addresses how learners are involved in the

changed context, gaining the new knowledge required by a new context to adapt to this changed

context; and contextualization stresses generating new knowledge by situating the knowledge in

the local context. As part of the social construction process, simulation and socialization both

emphasize adaption. However, the pattern of simulation emphasizes how learners adapt the

imitated knowledge to their own situation. The new knowledge and the knowledge being

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imitated are analogical or homogenous. The pattern of socialization stresses how learners are involved in, molded by and adapt to the changed social context. The changed social context exercises social influence on learners and directs learners to learn certain knowledge. The knowledge required by the changed context is heterogeneous to or is missing in learners' previous knowledge base.

According to Berger and Luckmann's (1967) theory about knowledge construction, the patterns of knowledge construction have their different focuses. For example, radiation addresses the transferring of the individual knowledge to the public; circulation, simulation, socialization, and contextualization address the process of how knowledge is shared and generated. Most of these patterns include the elements of interaction and adaptation, which reflect the features of social constructionism. Some patterns are intermingled in some learning activities. For example, the learning activities to support learners' socialization may include the patterns of circulation and simulation, too.

<center>Socio-Cultural Factors Shaping Knowledge Construction</center>

The aim of the Zhabei Learning Community is to create a lifelong learning environment for the local people in the Zhabei District. Conversations with the administrators and instructors show that the Zhabei Learning Community has, to some extent, absorbed Western educational ideas to nurture a learner-centered learning environment. However, learning experiences from the participants show that the macro socio-cultural factors still influences adults' learning and shapes the knowledge construction practices.

In my data analysis process, I found the answers to research questions two and four— what are the socio-cultural factors shaping the knowledge construction? and how do they shape the knowledge construction?— significantly overlapped. Therefore, in this section, I combined

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these two research questions. Several themes emerged in terms of socio-cultural factors shaping the knowledge construction, including: traditional Chinese values of respecting authority, moderation, discourse of age, and discourse of saving face. Two other socio-cultural factors shaping the knowledge construction are political bureaucracy and economic reforms. I describe how each factor shapes knowledge construction.

Respecting Authority

Dai (2008) writes that in China, respect for hierarchy and authority has a profound socio-economic foundation. For thousands of years, the Chinese people have been tied to small agriculture production modes with family as a unit, and established the male patriarchal system, which built a practical basis for the authority. Confucian ethics further solidified the idea of connecting the patriarchal blood relationship (son respects father, wife respects husband, the younger respects the elder) to the patriarchal political relationship (subjects respect the rulers, and non-authorities respect the authorities), which built an ideological legitimacy for respecting authority. Even though the wave of globalization swept China at the end of the 20th Century, the idea of authority still has a significant impact on knowledge construction practice in the Zhabei Learning Community.

The idea of authority influenced the participants' self-esteem and their willingness to value ideas from other learners. Qiong said his classmates did not want to discuss with each other the problems in learning because they did not want to admit that they were less knowledgeable than others. He said if he tried to help his classmates, they might think this way: "who authorizes you as the number One [to teach us]?" Such complicated feelings existed in Yang's learning cell. Yang said that in her Chorus group, the learners preferred to ask the instructor questions instead of asking the classmates:

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Yang: I said, "oh, you sang pretty well." She said: "really?" I said, "yes." I praised her, then I thought, eh, how did she sing that well?

Bo:　Then you asked your instructor?

Yang: Yes….The instructor would not laugh at me. Because she is our instructor, I am her student; I should be lower than her [professionally]. But among the classmates, it's kind of …[embarrassing if I ask my classmates how they sing so well].

Though Yang knew that her classmate sang very well in certain areas, she did not ask her how she gained such knowledge and skills. Instead, she asked her instructor. In Yang's mind, she regarded the instructor as an authority and the master of the knowledge, one who is superior to her and her classmates and has the legitimacy to transfer the knowledge to them. The ideology of authority and hierarchy was implanted in her mind so strongly that it constrained her from learning from her peer classmates. This phenomenon existed in many of the learning activities in the Zhabei Learning Community. For example, in terms of who would make a final decision on some difficult issues , most of the participants prefer to listen to authorities such as experts, leaders, teachers, mentors and the stakeholders in power because they trust the power and expertise of the authorities.

Yan said that they trusted authorities such as the mentors because generally, mentors have more professional experiences than the young professionals and therefore have higher credibility in dealing with the problems. Besides, she said her organization deals with electricity, which has a higher standard for safety. Safety was guaranteed mainly by following the regulations and the rules, with which the mentors are more familiar than the young professionals. Authorities' opinions are valued more than those of the non-authorities.

Zun, a leader of a private enterprise, said that he preferred lectures from authorities such as professors rather than meetings and seminars. He said most of the meetings and seminars only provided them the official and superficial topics, the routine information about political and economic policies and news, and the developmental strategies of the enterprises. Zun said he

already knew this information from TV and newspapers. He did not need superficial information that could not help his enterprise make money. He preferred the knowledge from the professors because professors could help him and his associates to see more deeply into situations. He said more often professors would combine the issues together with background information and the tacit knowledge hidden behind those issues, which provides a deeper level knowledge than that from non-authorities. He thought that as a leader, the ability to analyze information is more important than the ability to gain information.

The result of respecting authority is that authorities' voices are valued more than those of non-authorities. Jiang, from the Baoshan Photograph Salon, told me why he was nominated as the Salon team leader:

> Before the Salon was organized, a director of the propaganda office and another person came and asked me to run a photograph organization. I said, "Are you kidding me?…I am such an old man, how can I move [at such old age]? " I said, "There are many people who can photograph, you invite others." Later, Qi, the director of the propaganda office, and Zhu, the director of the department, came and brought me a bunch of stuff. I said, "Oh, you brought them to the wrong place, I am not your relative." He said, "Oh, we want to invite you to [be the team leader of the Salon]." I said, "I have already told you, I am too old, how can I…?" He said, "Because you are famous, we want to invite you. Others cannot do it well… "

Though this salon is only an organization providing some activities for elderly people to have some fun, it is organized as a brand-name learning cell in the local community. The leaders from the local community wanted to invite Jiang, a recognized authority in the field, to take charge of this salon, though Jiang insisted he was too old to have the energy to organize activities. Jiang recounted how Tu was recommended as their team leader but later refused to accept this title:

> I asked him why? [He said] "Why? You see you took good pictures. If I come and manage these people, my photography skills are not better than others." I said, "Oh, you only need to take charge of the management work, don't worry about the photography." In the end …he did not come. He said, "I can't, I cannot go, I am freaked out [joking]." In our salon, many of our members have higher titles, such as engineer, general engineer. That day one person came. He was the pre-vice president of the court. There were also

several retired cadres. So Tu said, "I am just a little young guy, how can I speak when I face the others [who have higher titles]?"

Tu, a younger member who was supposed to be an ideal team leader, was afraid to accept this

position because he was uncomfortable with leading the other members with the "big titles."

From these conversations, we can see the impact of the idea of authority on this photography

salon.

The idea of respecting the authorities had a holistic influence on Jiang's Salon. It not only

impacted who would be the team leader, it also influenced the communication style and product

evaluation in the Salon. Jiang mentioned how they discussed traveling and taking pictures

together and the influence of his opinions as an authority:

Bo: You five key team leaders discussed where to go. What if you had different
           opinions?
Jiang: We seldom had such a thing.
Bo: For example, you want to go to this place, he suggests going another place.
Jiang: No such a thing.
Bo: Oh, you all thought of the same thing?
Jiang: Most of them respected my opinion.

Authority is respected very much in this Salon, which at the same time shows that uncritical

dialogue and leader dominance were the main communication and interaction styles. This is in

accordance with two of my observations about this Salon. I observed this Salon on June 16 2008

and July 11 2008. On June 16, I noticed that most of the time the team leader Jiang showed the

members' pictures in PowerPoint and at the same time made some comments. Other members

either looked at the pictures, talked with each other, or did their own things. Occasionally,

someone made some comments. This pattern of interaction is leader dominated. That is, the

leader made all the decisions in discussion and the discussion is to share one-sided uncritical

knowledge. On the second occasion, a new professional photographer came and showed his

shots of dragonflies and lotuses, and shared his knowledge of how to take those beautiful

pictures. The members had great interest in his pictures and asked some questions, and discussed

and shared the techniques and the skills used in these pictures. This is a grounding dialogue for

constructing knowledge.

In some learning cells, though the traditional authorities still had their impact, the concept

of the "authorities" was reinterpreted and redefined. The traditional one-way leader-dominance

interaction style was gradually replaced by shared authority from the multi-stakeholders. Lang,

the team leader of the power transformation professional group of the Shanghai H.B. Power Co.,

said that sometimes to solve a complicated problem in their work, many stakeholders were

involved in making a decision:

> Bo: How did you come to an agreement [in your group work]?
> Lang: It depends on the team leader. For the same issue, some may think this way is
>   better, some may think that way is better. But in practice, it may not be right (with
>   both ways) and the third option might be better. Then I [as a team leader]) would
>   consult the leaders, report this situation to the upper leaders for an agreement, or
>   communicate with the other organizations and see how they dealt with similar
>   issues…Then if necessary, I as a team leader would collaborate with the relevant
>   teams to solve the problems.

In Lang's team, to reach an agreement on an issue, she and her team members provided the

optional solutions or pulled the knowledge and wisdom from peer professional organizations and

teams. Multi-stakeholders were involved in this decision-making process after getting the

political authorities' permission. Hao, also from the Shanghai H. B. Power Co., mentioned that

nowadays, the team leaders in her organization were not really a traditional image of "the

authorized leaders." The team leaders are mainly facilitating the whole team's effort to work

through the problems in their teams. "It's not the idea of I am a leader, I must do this, and the

others must listen to me. It's not this concept," Hao said. She further confirmed that "the feature

of the [traditional image of] team leader is not that obvious. It's just that everyone can contribute

something." The leaders in Hao's organization are more like the facilitators who support the

collective efforts rather than the authorities who have absolute power in the decision-making process.

Professional authorities usually could provide deep-level knowledge. However, giving absolute priority to the authorities might also block the grassroots knowledge accumulated by the learners. Some learning cells realized this limitation and deconstructed the concept of the authority by drawing on the multiple stakeholders' knowledge in decision making or by redefining the function of the authorities.

Moderation

Moderation is a traditional Chinese belief that influences many aspects of Chinese people. According to Confucius, moderation means avoiding the extremes and following the normality and the rules that most people in society accept. Following the majority is one of the indicators of how moderation influences knowledge construction. The learning experiences of Jiang, Lian, Xun, and Chau showed that moderation is one of the principles in judging what kind of the knowledge is valued most in their learning cells. Jiang, from the Baoshan Photograph Salon, told me how they evaluated the members' photos:

> Bo: So how did you decide which pictures should be exhibited?
> Jiang: We decided together.
> Bo: Your key team members? If there are no problems, then…
> Jiang: We discussed together.
> Bo: How about if you had different opinions?
> Jiang: Then we followed the majority. Because art is different, we have different appreciation abilities and different ways of thinking. This picture, you want to exhibit it, it is an art product. As an art product, we have different opinions. You think this is good, why is it good? He thinks that is good, why is it good? But you must have an agreed upon idea. The majority thinks it good, [then it is good].

Jiang told me that most of the time they followed the majority's opinions to reach an agreement. He agreed that sometimes it is good to listen to the different ideas. However, he explained why some controversial products were rejected:

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Jiang: For this stuff, you see, most of time, you need to have agreement. We seldom had
controversy. If so, then we just threw it away. The products that cause disputes
would not be selected.

Bo: If you had different opinions on one product, then it will not be selected?

Jiang: We have limitations on the number of pictures that would be exhibited. There were
many pictures to select from, we generally selected several. For example, I only
need five big pictures, I selected from those 100 pictures.

Bo: But is there a possibility that some are really good but none of you could appreciate
them?

Jiang: It's definitely for sure. ..such things happen everywhere. Some were eliminated
here, but received a golden price at another place.

This example shows that the idea of moderation determines that the idea that the majority agrees

on is valued most in this photography salon.

Working on projects collectively is encouraged by the Shanghai H.B. Power Company as

a way of generating new ideas and new methods from practical work. An example from Lian,

one of the leaders at the Shanghai H.B. Power Company, indicates that the safest way to do an

experimental project is to follow the majority's opinions, instead of favoring the extreme:

Bo: In your experimental project, you might first select a proposal to decide where to start
your work. What if there are disagreements about the proposals? Do you need to
examine them one by one?

Lian: Right. At the beginning, we will have four proposals, then we choose one.

Bo: Which one?

Lian: We discuss. The simplest is to discuss. We choose the one that we agree on. Unless
this proposal does not work [in practice], we will not consider the others. Because
every proposal has its advantages and disadvantages, after the comparison…

Bo: Usually you follow the majority's opinions?

Lian: Yes. It is not the case that several people agree on the first proposal, the majority
agrees on the others, and in the end we will select the first one. Because even those
who insist on the first proposal do not know if this proposal definitely works [in
practice]…

Bo: What if someone who is an expert favors the first proposal but the majority trusts the
third proposal?

Lian: We never had such a situation. Because this is not the final decision. At the beginning,
we mainly discuss [the proposals]…To conduct a project, the company will invest
plenty of money. It is not likely that we try this one, and then try the next one.

In Lian's professional group, the members chose the experimental proposals based on the

majority's opinions. Only when the selected proposal does not work do they possibly consider

the other options. They believe that following the majority's opinion is a safe and sufficient way to guarantee that their investment will not be at risk.

The above examples indicate that the rule of following the majority determines that in the knowledge sharing process, only that knowledge accepted by the majority will be selected from among the possibilities. However, it is possible that some special or cutting-edge idea that is outside the majority's knowledge scope might be neglected, eliminated and discarded in the knowledge construction practice.

Discourse of Age

In the Zhabei Learning Community, the discourse of age is one of the essential factors constraining the learners from learning and sharing knowledge. The local people's perception of age made a deep impression on me. In the programs provided to the elderly, the retired people are all called the elderly people, even though some are only in their 50s. Many participants stated that they could not learn any more because they are too old. Six participants, including Yang, Shen, Fan, Sun, Xun, and Wan thought they were too old and that it was not that necessary for them to learn. When I asked Shen, an 30-year old migrant worker, if he would like to attend some free programs provided by the local community to gain some professional skills, he said he was too old, and it was too late to learn. Xun, in his early 40s, said he had no ambition to learn new skills and techniques anymore because he thought he was too old. Yang, in her late 50s, dreamed of becoming a stunning singer star when she was very young, thought she was not young anymore, and it was unrealistic to learn to be an excellent professional singer at her age now. Wan, in her late 40s, has already lost her enthusiasm for learning to get a better job. She said:

> I think I should change my mind [and not think learning to get a better job with a high
> salary] since I am old now. I cannot continue to compare my current job to my previous

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job [which had a higher salary]. Now I work in the community [with a low salary]. Anyway, I am not young anymore, and the time of enthusiastic youth will not be back again. I must face this reality. Later I was an employment assistant in the community [with a low salary].

Though the idea of lifelong learning has been disseminated in the local community for many years, many participants are still restrained by the traditional discourse of age and learning. Some learners believe that learning is a young people's business and once you graduate from school, you should concentrate on your work. In the Zhabei Learning Community, learning is influenced by the traditional Chinese belief that "An old dog cannot learn the new tricks"— that is, it's too late for old people to learn after graduating from school. Many learners might be blocked from learning and creating new knowledge because of their negative view of age and learning.

Discourse of Saving Face

Another discourse that restrains learners from learning from each other is the discourse of saving face. Four participants, Qiong, Yang, Xun, and Chau told me how they were afraid of losing face in learning. For example, Qiong described how some learners were afraid of asking questions because of the losing face problem:

Bo: Why didn't they [the learners] ask questions?
Qiong: Some had no ability to ask.
Bo: Then they should ask simple questions.
Qiong: [They] dared not to ask. Lack of confidence. ..Dared not to talk…The instructor will not blame you [if you make a mistake], but some learners might laugh at you. He [some learner who laughs at those who ask questions] would say, hey, you are so dumb. [Actually]He himself does not understand [that concept] too.

Qiong's description shows that the learners in his learning cells were afraid of losing face by asking questions and also tried to block others' questions by making fun of the others for their mistakes. Yang was a professional singer before she joined the West Zhijiang Chorus program. She told me her classmates did not share much information and knowledge with each other out of fear of losing face. Some might respond: "Are you singing better than me? Why would I ask

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your help? '' She said she did not tell her classmates she was a professional singer in case they would laugh at her for not being excellent. She said usually her classmates did not ask the instructor questions either because they felt embarrassed.

Chau's description of their management training activity further indicates how the discourse of losing face restrained the learners, especially the learners in higher positions, from sharing knowledge openly. Chau said:

> We in leadership positions did not spontaneously share our ideas with others. We only observed and read others' minds. We had some ideas, but we did not speak them out, we ruminated in our minds. We talked very delicately and reservedly. What I am concerned about is the [the possibilities of] failure. You ask me to do this, if I can do it successfully, I will feel honored. What if I fail? I will feel loss of face…To do the kind of [leadership]work as we do, [you need to be] moderate[or Zhongyong in Chinese].

Chau said whoever wanted to be the team leader in their group collaborative activities would take the responsibility for the whole group. Most of the time, the learners who are in the lower positions would lead the group work, and the leaders would give some suggestions about how to improve the work. This way the leaders will not be afraid of losing face if they fail and will be honored for correcting the mistakes the team made.

The above examples show that being afraid of failure and losing face still restrained the learners in the Zhabei Learning Community from sharing knowledge with each other. The discourse of saving face restrained peer knowledge in some learning cells.

Political Bureaucracy

The Zhabei Learning Community is supported by the government. The government has the power to control the learning cells from the top positively or negatively. Political bureaucracy is one of the factors affecting the learning cells in the Zhabei Learning Community. Jiang, from the Baoshan Photograph Salon, realizes the impact of the political bureaucracy and

followed the bureaucratic rules to invite the community leaders to come when they evaluated

their members' products at the end of the year:

> Jiang: This [inviting the leaders] is to show our respect for the leaders. We invited him and just wanted him to participate. Actually, it was mainly [us as the professionals] to evaluate…You got the first, the second and the third prizes, and showed him.
> Bo: He nodded his head?
> Jiang: Yeah. [he would say] good, good. You should show him, to show you respected him. Otherwise, [he would think] what are you doing here…?

Since the local government financially supports this salon, Jiang knows how important it is to

invite the leaders to come, and to show their respect to them. He knows how this political

bureaucracy works and just follows the rules, and then got support from the street.

One of the negative impacts of this political bureaucracy on learning activities is that

sometimes decisions on which programs will be favored, and which learning activities will be

supported depend on the leaders' inclinations. Many times Shen mentioned how well one leader

treated them. However, later when the leadership changed, their learning activities changed too:

> Shen: Previously, Ms. Hu. was in charge of our Dragon Dance and its finance. Now it seems the Dragon Dance is not paid as much attention. In the past it was given much more attention. Later, it was not given attention, and gradually the activities diminished. Now Ms. Hu is not in charge.…
> Bo: Just now you mentioned that Hu told you dragon dance could support you to make lots of money [Laugh].
> Shen: If we dance well. At that time, we did look forward to it.
> Bo: Oh, you really looked forward to it.
> Shen: Now I've lost my interest. In the past, they described it well, but in the end they did not support us any more.

The conversation with Shen showed that one disadvantage of the top-down bureaucratic

management in the learning community is that when the leader changes, it is not guaranteed

that the original learning programs will still be supported. Shen further articulated this situation

in the following conversation:

> Bo: At the beginning when your reading activity was in its busiest season, would you meet once a week?
> Shen: No.

Bo: Then Once a month?

Shen: Sometimes once a month, sometimes not.

Bo: When would you meet? — When did the leaders come?

Shen: After the Migrant Home [now called New Shanghainese Club] was founded, the leaders from the city visited us several times…to see what was happening. They came several times…For a period of time, it seemed that it [the Migrant Home] was very popular, and the upper [the leaders] paid attention to it. Later, after a period, it was not paid attention to. If the city pays attention to it, the streets will pay attention to it, and vice verse.

Bo: [Laugh] if the central government pays attention to it, then everyone will pay attention to it.

Shen: The upper level controls the lower level.

The Zhabei Learning Community was controlled by the three-level hierarchical governments: the central government, the regional government and the local government. This hierarchical management system is very supportive in integrating the learning resources in the community. However, the problem is that sometimes the local governments treated the learning programs as one part of their political achievement showcases and neglected the learners' needs. For example, below Shen described how bureaucracy ruined his trust for the learners, the instructors and the learning programs and destroyed his motivation for joining the learning activities provided by the local community:

Shen: The main problem is that the leaders are changeable. This leader used this method, that leader used that method. For example, in the past, Shi supported the Migrant Home. Later the new leader came, he felt, "what? Migrant Home?" His mind had no such concept. Every leader has his own way.

Bo: Besides the reading activity, what other activities [did the local community provide to you]?

Shen: Few…Basically, I attended most of the activities. Fen [instructor] called me several times and asked me to come. I was busy at that time. I told her: "Sorry, I have no time to attend." I attended the activity Fen organized one time.

Bo: What activity?

Shen: Nothing. Before the leaders came [to visit our learning activity], [we were asked to]come and sit there, each one of us was given one bottle of water, waiting for the leaders coming.

Bo: What's the benefit for you to attend such activity?

Shen: They called me and said: Please come and help us. [I attended] mainly because of Hu. I was supported by her once I came to Shanghai [when I was a teenager], and she cared about me.

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In Shen's description, we know that the instructor "invited" the learners to come only when the

leaders would come to "investigate" their learning activities. The political bureaucracy destroyed

the learners' trust in the leaders and the instructors. Though Shen still came to the activity to

"give help" because of his personal feelings for the previous instructor, Hu, gradually he refused

to attend such activities. More important is that with this negative influence from the political

bureaucracy, learners had no opportunity to pursue the knowledge deeply and persistently. The

knowledge provided to them cannot satisfy the learners' needs. Shen clearly confirmed this

negative influence on their learning activities:

> Bo: What did you learn from these activities in the New Shanghainese Club?
> Shen: Not much of the practical stuff. No matter what, we were unable to continue to
>   learn them.
> Bo: For example, computer, law…
> Shen: All of it was learned superficially, none of them were able to continue to the end.
> Bo: [You] just learned a little and wanted to go deep, then they're gone.
> Shen: Just stopped.
> Bo: None of them are transferred to the [knowledge] products. You wished they could
>   go deeper?
> Shen: In terms of deeper, you cannot just suspend this activity for a very long time, and
>   then continue to do it again.
> Bo: Yes. Gradually you just won't trust them.
> Shen: Right.
> Bo: For the Dragon Dance, if the leaders want to continually support it, will you still
>   attend it?
> Shen: It depends on what it looks like in the future. If the leaders can support it
>   continuously, I might attend it. If it still looks like before, supported and stopped,
>   supported and stopped, then I have not much interest.

One important feature of the learning community is the atmosphere of trust. Because of the trust,

the members were willing to share their tacit knowledge with each other. The political

bureaucracy gradually ruined this atmosphere of trust. Chan, from the same New Shanghainese

Club, kept saying, "Oh, we were neglected [by the community], neglected after July." Without

trust in the leaders and the instructors, some learners did not believe they could benefit from the

learning activities in the community. Furthermore, because of the bureaucratic management, the

criteria to judge what should be taught is mainly based on the leaders' desires, not on learners'

needs. The learners felt they were always staying at the same superficial level of knowledge, and

they seldom had the opportunity to continue this knowledge exploration and to go deeper and

transfer this deeper knowledge into their practice.

Economic Reform

Economic reform in China started in 1978 in agriculture when the farm households were

allowed to rent the publicly owned land; then in the early 1990s, economic reform was

introduced to the state-owned enterprises. In the late 1990s, small and medium-sized state-owned

enterprises were transformed into private enterprises. The large enterprises were still controlled

by the government under the new leadership system: the enterprises were allowed to retain all

the profits after taxes, but the government keeps its eyes on those large enterprises' development

(Chaw, 2005). The economic reforms dramatically influenced nearly every area in China and

correspondingly nearly every aspect of the participants' life and their perceptions of learning.

The impact from the economic reform included such things as: the pressure from global

competition since China joined WTO (The World Trade Organization), the cultural impact from

foreign companies, the competition from private companies and companies from other regions

in China, the challenge and the opportunities from the market, a big gap between rich and poor,

the unstable social psychology and the mixture of market-driven values and traditional values.

The economic reform challenged the traditional values and beliefs and required people to

change. Before the market reform, employees got paid well without much education; they did not

think it necessary to get a higher education. The economic reform pushed the enterprises to

transform from heavy industry-oriented enterprises to high technical and knowledge-oriented

enterprises, which caused many employees to be laid off, especially those who did not have

higher education degrees or professional certificates. Xun, an employee of the D. N. Community

Affairs Center, described how the economic reform affected the state-owned enterprises and

pushed the leaders and the employees to change. He said that the enterprise he worked for made

steel windows. The economic reform broke the traditional enterprise management model. Similar

types of non-state-owned enterprises from the cities of Dalian, Xu zhou, etc. rushed into

Shanghai. Those enterprises had dozens of manufacturing lines and production lines. They also

had very flexible sales methods; they could sell their products according to the market needs and

got the rebates. Though some employees and organizations still held their traditional values,

others were trying to break the traditional planned economic model and explore the new

developmental strategies to adapt to the changed context. Chau, a leader from the Shanghai X. B.

Power Co., said that in the 1970s and 1980s, as national manipulated enterprises, the electrical

enterprises did not pay much attention to good service. People always found it difficult to do

business with the big state-owned enterprises since they did not have competitors. The state-

owned electrical enterprises were called "Power Tigers," and no one dared to bargain with them.

After the economic reform, the competition from the other enterprises such as the water and gas

enterprises and the Shanghai annual enterprise service evaluation pushed the electrical

enterprises to improve their product quality and to provide good service. China's joining the

WTO further pushed the electrical companies to reexamine their overall competitive ability and

to build a powerful collective learning system to motivate their employees to learn competitive

skills and knowledge. Zun, a leader of the Shanghai X. Y. Trans. Co, said that the economic

reform required their private enterprise to grow up quickly as an independent enterprise that

follows the market rules. He, as a leader, "propagandized" the discourse of the market to his

employees, especially to those who were once employees in the state-owned enterprises. He told

them that they did not have the "parental protection" from the state, and they must depend on their skills and abilities to survive. Leaders and employees of most enterprises took actions to improve themselves in order to adapt to the changed society.

Some people got lost by not having guidance as to the knowledge and skills they needed to learn and the strategies they should adopt. As the market reform went deeper, those who had higher education degrees but no professional institutionalized knowledge and skills were also laid off and found it hard to find better jobs without professional certificates. Sun was one of those laid-off workers. The economic reform in the early of 1990s broke Sun's "steel bowl" (permanently stable job). After searching for many jobs, he realized an academic degree was important. After he finally got a college degree, he found out that every field set up its institutionalized knowledge to separate the outsiders from the insiders. He said:

> Yes, [according to] what you learned, you must work in that field, you cannot go beyond that field. So if you got a college degree, but you have no special skills, you have to search for a job in a general area. [This type of job has] no big demands, everyone can do [this type of job], and therefore the salary is not high.

Influenced by the economic reforms, many institutions gradually adapted their development strategy to high-tech and high knowledge-centered and required their employees to have higher degrees and the special skills and certificates. Sun, who acknowledged this tendency in experiencing the economic reforms and was struggling to find a way out by learning some skills, said:

> Now the social pressure is too much. Now how much salary do I have [I do not have much salary], how much energy with which I could learn [I do not have much energy to learn]. Because of my age, my family nagged me to get married.

Because of the economic reforms, Sun's previous knowledge base was broken and outdated, and he could not catch up with the march of society.

Some gave up their effort to positively adapt to a new context. Shen, a migrant doing cleaning work in the local community, found in recent years that expenses in Shanghai were becoming higher and higher. He decided to give up learning and tried to maintain his current situation and just follow his fate after he found out that there were fewer opportunities provided to him. The economic reform brought a big gap between poor and rich. Migrant workers' living conditions are poor, and they are under pressure to make a good living in Shanghai , so that they have little motivation to learn. There were much fewer learning opportunities provided to the migrant workers to improve their living conditions. Shen mentioned that because of his poor financial situation, he did not plan to learn a professional skill to help him find a better job. He said that the Dragon Dance, one of the migrant workers' favorite activities that enabled them to become familiar with Shanghai, could not be reorganized because the migrant workers did not have a stable salary to support their learning. Though it was free to attend these activities, they did not like to sacrifice their working time for learning:

According to Shen:

Shen: It [the Dragon Dance] does not work if they [the migrant workers] do not have stable work…Without stable work, after the migrant workers move [to the other places], it [the Dragon Dance] does not work.
Bo: But the new members can still join in [the Dragon Dance]?
Shen: The new members will not come.
Bo: They will not come?
Shen: They do not like to come.
Bo: Why?
Shen: Without the candy (the benefit), they do not like to come.
Bo: Why? What kind of candy do they like to have?
Shen: Money.
Bo: They do not come without being paid?
Shen (Laugh): Without food to eat, how could they [have energy to] rehearse [the Dragon Dance]?

Without a stable salary, Shen and the other migrant workers barely had motivation to join in the learning activities provided to them. What concerns them the most is finding a better job and

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making a life in Shanghai. When I asked another migrant worker, Chan, what the Zhabei Learning Community could do to help him, he said he wanted the community to help his wife to find a job. For him, no matter what, the most important thing is to make a living first rather than joining in the learning activities.

Some people successfully adapted to the new context through observing and experiencing the new culture, and learning the skills required by the new context. Unlike Shen, who gave up his dream of having a good life, and Sun, who got lost in the economic reform, Wan developed her new role in the new context. Wan described her experience of transferring from a state-owned enterprise to a joint-ventured enterprise and how this transformation changed her view of the new life. She said what attracted her most was the fact that the joint-ventured companies provided much higher salaries, had disciplined and well-trained employees, a comfortable working environment and the new enterprise culture. She said that the employees in the state-owned enterprises usually were industrious but simple-minded. They liked gossip and argument. But in the joint-ventured enterprise, they were required to listen to their bosses without argument and gossip. All they needed to do was to follow their bosses' directions, even though their bosses were open to suggestions from the local employees about the policy and laws. Wan said that in order to survive in the new environment, she must change her previous habits and ways of doing things, learn to adapt to the new context through observing and experiencing the new culture, and learn the new skills required. Wan felt that was a fresh experience for her.

Market reform produced a market-driven competitive atmosphere, too, which promoted societal and technical development but at the same time caused fierce competition and blocked knowledge sharing. The market-driven economic model strengthened the competition in the enterprises and among the employees. Zun told me that in order to motivate their employees to

learn the competitive skills and knowledge, Shanghai X.Y. Trans. Co. promoted the importance

of education and provided training and learning activities to its employees. At the same time, the

company signed learning contract with its employees. In the learning contract, it said that those

who achieve their learning aims would be rewarded, and those who fail to reach their learning

aims and were also listed as the worst learners among their professional groups would be

eliminated from the company.

This fierce competition not only existed in the enterprises but also in the other learning

cells in the local community. Yang said that because of the annual evaluation and competition

among the Chorus groups in Zhabei Learning Community, the chorus groups seldom

communicated with each other. The organizers of the Chorus groups seldom provided the

information about the other advanced Chorus groups from other streets to prevent accomplished

members from jumping to those advanced chorus groups. The communication network was

blocked among the chorus groups in this fierce competitive environment.

However, some learning cells do realize the importance of knowledge sharing and were

trying to develop a win-win competitive learning system. For example, Shanghai H.B. Electrical

Power Co. created a collaborative enterprise culture to guarantee that its employees have a

platform to show their competitive ability and at the same time to share their knowledge and

strengths and to collaborate with each other. Hao said that because safety is very crucial for the

electrical power company, it is necessary to have a system to guarantee that everyone in the

company has a sense of safety and immediately informs each other of any potential problems.

Therefore, everyone should share whatever they know. In order to motivate this kind of

collaboration in competition and create a smooth communication platform, Shanghai H.B.

Electrical Power Co. rewarded the individual professional groups which excelled instead of the

individual employees. Hao said that in the Shanghai H.B. Electrical Power Co., there is a QC (Quality control) system encouraging every professional group to submit their project proposals and their achievements as a group. This guaranteed that all in the group would collaborate and share their knowledge in the project. This professional group communicated with the other groups smoothly since there were different types of professional groups, and they did not need to worry about negative competition. At the end of the year, if all of the groups had outstanding achievements, then all of the groups would be rewarded. This kind of win-win competitive learning system greatly promoted innovation and collaboration in the company.

In summary, knowledge construction practice in the Zhabei Learning Community was influenced by three-folded factors: the traditional Chinese values such as respecting authority, moderation, discourses of age and face; the political bureaucracy, and finally, the economic reforms. The traditional culture blocked some knowledge from the grassroots and from peers, and blocked some cutting-edging knowledge. The economic reform created opportunities for learners and at the same time created fierce competition, which blocked certain institutionalized and tacit knowledge from being shared. Political bureaucracy suspended some knowledge that learners valued from being continuously provided.

Learning Community Factors Shaping Knowledge Construction

In this part, I combined the following two research questions: What are the learning community factors shaping the knowledge construction? how do they shape the knowledge construction? Several themes emerged in terms of the learning community factors shaping the knowledge construction, including: (a) government support; (b) connection with community development; (c) creation of a harmonious learning environment; (d) comprehensive learning

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networks; and (e) linear and non-linear learning structures. For each factor, I describe how it shapes knowledge construction.

Government support

In the Zhabei Learning Community, the government recommended establishing collaborative networks among the different organizations and institutions; it provided free training programs to the disadvantaged people and financially supported the learning activities in the local community schools. The government support promoted the collaboration and interaction among the government, the professional institutions and the grassroots organizations in facilitating lifelong learning in the local community.

The government promoted the different stakeholders in supporting lifelong learning in the local community. The residential community committees and the grassroots autonomous organizations authorized by the government are the bridges connecting the work between the local residential citizens and the governments. Most of the participants, including the elderly, the migrants and the unemployed, mentioned the support from the residential community committees. According to Wan and Sun's descriptions, the offices of the residential community committees are located in the local residential communities. The members of the committees are selected from the local residential communities and are responsible for organizing the learning activities, contacting the organizations and the local institutions about learning programs and campaign activities, and collecting basic information about the local residents. For example, once some people in the local community lose their jobs or retire, or some migrants move into a local residential community, the members of this residential committee will immediately visit them and become familiar with their situations, and encourage them to join in the learning programs provided by the local community schools, or refer them to the local community affairs

center for help in searching for a job. Four unemployed workers, Xun, Wan, Hu and Sun, currently working at the D. N. Community Affair Center, found their current job with the help of the members of the committee responsible for the employment work. Sun told me how he found his current job with the help of the employment assistance:

Bo: How did you find this job?

Sun: One employment assistant on our street told us that there were some openings for the positions of employment assistants and window assistants, the salary was 1000 Yuan [Chinese currency, 1000 Yuan equals around 146 dollar in March 2009]... They [the employment assistants] did a very good job. Once you lose your job, they will call you and ask you the situation, and provide you the employment information according to your needs and your situation.

Bo: How did she know your [unemployed] information?

Sun: She checked the computer. All the information is registered in the computer and is connected together on the Internet. Once you are fired, your information will be registered by the company and your unemployment information will appear in the [unemployed] database…Then the employment assistants will check how many young people, how many are at the different ages…Then they will visit you, and check what jobs are open and are right for you.

According to Sun's description, the government created a comprehensive collaborative network among the re-employment institutions (institutions supporting the unemployed in finding jobs), the employers, the office of the residential committee and the local community schools. Wan confirmed what Sun described and said that whenever someone loses his/her job, his/her unemployment information is put into the computer network and is transferred to the local community affairs center, and is further reported to the local Residential Committee. The members of the local Residential Committee responsible for the employment work will then inquire about the unemployed people's needs, their abilities and education backgrounds. Information is then sent back to the local community affairs center and/or the local community schools for further action.

The government collaborated with the other institutions and organizations in the local community to create an "incubator" for some local people in disadvantaged situations to adapt to

society. For example, to help unemployed people find jobs, the government implemented a

series of strategies aligning with the other relevant organizations. These strategies included

creating more employment openings, assisting unemployed workers in learning how to run a

company in the free-tax pilot companies, etc. Below, Sun described how the government

supported the unemployed workers in starting a new life:

> Sun: There's a Zero Training Program [for these who have no skills]. According to your needs, you select what you want to learn, for example, computer, cake baking, cooking.
> Bo: Zero training? Who provided it?
> Sun: Our state.
> Bo: Oh, the government provided it to the unemployed workers?
> Sun: Yes. You pay for 100 Yuan, and after you get the certificate, you will be rewarded 300 Yuan...There are also intermediate level and high level training programs, which are not just 100 Yuan, but 600 Yuan.
> ….
> Sun: Our employment assistants also help [the unemployed workers] to start their own business. These [businesses] are informal companies…
> Bo: Informal companies?
> Sun: Informal companies, not formal, tax-free companies, no tax for three years.... They are not supervised by the industry and business bureau. Basically the state supports them, and the employment assistants can also help you to open the companies. Gradually they [the informal companies] will transfer from the informal to formal.

The government supports the unemployed workers' effort to become reemployed again by

rewarding them for completing the training programs, and supporting their experiments in

running a business. Free training and learning through practice are closely connected together.

　　The free training and learning programs provided to the disadvantaged people by the

government helped those people to change. In order for the migrants to become socialized to

Shanghai life, the Women's Federation, the sponsor of the Sisters Club, provided a series of

activities to the migrant wives, such as entertainment programs, survival skills training programs,

and health and beauty programs. The purpose of those activities was to increase the migrant

wives' confidence, dignity and ability to adapt to Shanghai society. For example, Hong, a

housewife, wanted to find a job after her child grew up. The Women's Federation in the local

community encouraged her to attend free training programs such as the Shanghai dialect training

program, the shop assistant certificate training program and the computer training program,

which she said greatly helped her in the process of adapting to Shanghai society. Hong described

how the learning activities in the Club changed her life:

> Hong: After this training [provided by the Women's Federation], we must learn hard, to master more skills, to make more money, to enjoy more later. It's good. In the past, I did not plan to go outside [to work]. After I came here [Sisters Club], I felt good. I will make money, and travel not only in Shanghai, but to other places too.
> Bo: In the past you stayed at home to cook…
> Hong: Yes. In the past, I circled around Laogong [husband], kid, right?
> Bo: Yes, the world is so big, [imitating Hong's voice] "I circle around the kitchen? [no], I not only travel around Shanghai, but also travel to the other places."
> Hong: In the past, I communicated with lots of people, my previous work [required me to talk to different types of people]. Some [migrants] from the countries, they never have had the connections with others [in the city]. They saw all of the sights while sightseeing, [they felt] Oh, God, it is really worth it to come [to Shanghai]
> …
> Bo: Travel is a good way to increase knowledge.
> Hong: Yes. You came to this world, you have never been to somewhere, isn't it a pity? So I want to make more money. Now I made thousands of Yuan [as a shop assistant] [laugh], I don't need my Laogong's money anymore. I can afford my travel expenses.
> Bo: In the past, you depended on him, he might not give you much money. You mainly cooked for him.
> Hong: Yes. In the past, when I bought the groceries, even for one penny, I needed to ask him. Now, I am proud of myself, Old Zhang [her husband's family name], I don't need your money, I have money.

Hong described with happiness how her learning experiences in the Sisters Club changed her life

and her view of the women's values and allowed her to adapt to Shanghai society smoothly. She

told me her husband and mother-in-law respected her and loved her very much. She looked

forward to a bright future with great confidence. According to Hong's introduction, the Sisters

Club, with support from the Women's Federation, integrated the activities of training,

recruitment, entertainment, travel, social affairs activities, health and beauty together, which

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created an authentic and dynamic learning environment for the socialization of the migrant wives.

With the support of the government, all of the relevant institutions and organizations collaborated to support adult learning and adult development. The learning activities provided to the migrant workers and the unemployed workers involved the efforts not only of the educational departments, but also of the labor offices, the Women's Federation, the community schools, the residential committee offices, and the various companies that open their learning resources to the local people. Those organizations and institutions collaborated together to support the local people to learn and to change.

Connection with Community Development

Data from the interviews show that many learning cells were involved in community services and broadcasted the knowledge, the mainstream values and ideas to the local community, which increased community development and cohesion. Shen, a migrant, told me how the New Shanghainese Club organized migrants like him to do volunteer work for the community as a way of making connections with the community:

> Shen: In the past, …we went to the residential community, and the other residential communities to do the clean work [cleaning up computers].
> Bo: Ming organized you to do all of these?
> Shen: Yes, several times.
> Bo: You got paid?
> Shen: It's voluntary.
> …..
> Shen: There are several computers there, and have not been cleaned for several years. They organized the migrant workers to clean them.
> Bo: What's the response from the community?
> Shen: Definitely they said we were nice [laugh].
> …
> Bo: The community will ask you for help?
> Shen: Yes. I lived here for over ten years.
> Bo: For over ten years?
> Shen: Yeah.

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Bo: You must be very familiar with the community.
Shen: [Laugh] I know everything that's happened here.

Voluntary work as part of the activities in the New Shanghainese Club connects individual learners and the community together. The migrant workers' voluntary work not only improved the relations between them and the community citizens but helped them to be involved in the community life and made them feel that they were part of that residential community rather than complete outsiders. Individual learning was immersed into the mundane community practices and the community benefited from the learners' service.

Variable discourses were applied to transfer the knowledge to the community when the participants were involved in the community services. Below, Lian from the Shanghai H.B. Power company described how they transferred to the local community the knowledge about scientific and safe electricity through a whole package of services under the discourse of "Bright action of the youth:"

> The activities we organized most were broadcasting the idea of "how to use the electricity scientifically and safely." Besides, in summer, we went to the local community to broadcast how to use electricity reasonably. For example, setting the air conditioner to 26 degrees Centigrade makes our body feel comfortable and also helps us to save electricity. We broadcasted this knowledge to the citizens…Some of our activities are routinely organized in some specific seasons or holidays, for example, on Leifeng Day on March 5, and on Youth Day on May 5. Our activities were organized under the slogan of "Bright action of the youth." *Youth* refers to the young people, *bright* refers to the angel of the bright lights [provided by electricity]. With the discourse of "Bright action of the youth," we young colleagues organized many activities, including electricity consultation, installing divided ammeters for the local citizens, doing cleaning work for the residents of retirement homes, and helping the students in difficulties.

Lian and his colleagues did the volunteer campaign work to broadcast the electricity knowledge to the local community through a series of the services, such as consultation, supporting students in difficulty, and helping those in retirement homes. Under the discourse of "Bright action of the youth," these services were used as strategies by Lian and his colleagues to engage in community development and to create more opportunities to interact and communicate

with the local people about how to use electricity scientifically and safely, and ultimately to enhance the good image of the Shanghai H. B. Power Co. in the local community.

Culture was used as a tool in some learning activities to promote mainstream values and ideas in the local community. Nearly every learning activity for the elderly served the community development through volunteer works. Some elderly people served the community with their artful tools and imparted their knowledge to the public. Jiang told me that every year, their Photograph Salon took pictures of local events and exhibited their photos for free in the community cultural center for the local people. The members voluntarily took the pictures for the benefit of the disadvantaged people and sent the message of care and love from the society to these people. Lin, from the Ground Calligraphy Salon, said that in their Ground Calligraphy regulations, they required their members to follow the social rules to promote the mainstream values and not to write anti-society words. He said that their members wrote about current affairs [writing phrases] such as "Welcome Wu, BoXiong, Guomingdang Chairman [from Taiwan]. " "Welcome Beijing Olympic Games" on the ground in front of the local parks so that the public passing by the parks would have the opportunities to know those affairs. Hong, from the Sisters Club, explained to me how their learning experiences were made into a local TV program and motivated more migrant wives to follow their steps and acquire more knowledge and skills. Zun participates in the Reading Forum in Shanghai every year in the fall, which includes a reading holiday, book exhibitions, experience exchange meetings, and leisure learning activities such as fishing, ikebana, drawing, etc. Zun said the main purpose of this forum was to enrich the local people's lives and to lead them to have a healthier life instead of gambling and becoming corrupt. In these learning activities, cultural products such as the pictures, the TV programs, the Calligraphy, the reading holiday and so on were used as tools in some learning

activities to interact with the local people, to send the message of mainstream values and ideas to the local community, and to strengthen the cohesion of the community. Collective learning activities, together with volunteer work, campaigns, and cultural events were closely woven together to promote local community development.

Culture was used as a tool to signify the knowledge and news that the government wants to publicize in the local community. Lin, from the Ground Calligraphy Salon, Yang, from the Chorus program, and Qiong , from the Golden Dream Fashion Show program, told me that they had performance tasks assigned to them by the higher level authorities. They worked with the local governments to inform the local citizens of any information, knowledge, or news that the government wanted to publicize. Li, the instructor of the Golden Dream Fashion Show program, described how local citizens were informed:

> Our Golden Dream Fashion Team has entertainment performances and volunteer performances. Volunteer performances mainly serve the local community. For example, we performed at the Cool-Season Party which is organized every year in the community. We also performed for the Red Cross Donation Drive. This year, we performed for the Wen Chuan Earthquake Donation Fund. Each time we rehearsed a program with a theme based on these non-profit activities. For example, last time we focused on the theme of AIDS, and performed the Dedication of Love play in the local community. Also, our performances encouraged people to help protect the environment. In 2007, we made our costumes out of paper and used CD's. We used discarded plastic to make the leaves. We performed for the local citizens. We'd like to not only educate people in the community about how to recycle and reuse their trash, but also to raise their awareness about the importance of protecting the environment. Our team members also improved the overall quality of the fashion show and expanded their horizons through these non-profit performances.

These volunteer performances were used as props to transfer social responsibilities, general social knowledge, and mainstream moral values to the local citizens. This knowledge was embedded in the cultural performances and was expected to imperceptibly influence the local people. Knowledge created by the learners and instructors went beyond their small learning circles and was transferred into a larger local community. Qiong told me that cultural interaction

among performers and the audience in turn helped the learners to find out the limitations of their performances, to improve their skills and to recreate even more brilliant performances the next time around. These reciprocal interactions benefit both learners and local community citizens.

The above examples and also the annual evaluation reports by the community schools from the eight streets and one town indicate that a variety of discourses and cultural products were applied by some learning cells, which radiated and publicized the mainstream values, knowledge and news to the local community, and increased community development and cohesion.

Creating A Harmonious Learning Environment

One important feature of the learning community is that it creates an environment where learners can bound with each other, trust each other, and enjoying sharing their knowledge with each other. The Zhabei Learning Community created a harmonious learning environment and strengthened group cohesion and trust, which supported knowledge construction. In some learning cells, members organized travel, parties, cultural performances, exhibitions, and excursions, all of which connected learners together and bridged the gap between learners, instructors, and leaders. Below, Ting, the administrator of the Chorus program, introduced me to some of their cultural activities:

> Learners invited their classmates to visit their houses to sing songs, and then ate together. They also organized one-day trips. They organized these activities spontaneously, with everyone paying his/her own way.

> Every year, the chorus team had a singing party. We usually bought some snacks, sang, and then ate. The atmosphere was very good. Every year, we also organized a performance in the community. Some learners were not good at singing, but were good at dancing. We then asked them to dance for the chorus.

On June 17, 2008, I attended the singing party called "Zhi Yun Singing Party" organized by the West Zhijiang Chorus Group at the Zhabei Culture Hall. At the end of the chorus, Ting

announced: "Today is someone's birthday!" The learners cheered: "Today is our instructor

Zhen's birthday!" The whole hall cheered, and we sang the song Happy Birthday. In the dark,

the birthday candles were lit, and Zhen was surrounded by the learners who were singing and

circling around her. After that, most of the learners danced in the hall. Zhen told me with

excitement: "I would like to contribute all of what I know to the learners because I really love

this learning atmosphere." Some students said, "We came to this chorus because of Zhen."

Cultural activities smoothed the tensions among the learners, the instructors, and the leaders, and

bridged the gap between the performers and the audience. Qiong, from the Golden Dream

Fashion Show program, described how they nominated the group leaders in a joking atmosphere:

> Bo: [If] seven of the group members were the candidates of the group leaders, but you
> only needed five of them. Did your instructor make the final decision?
> Qiong: No. [Someone yelled], Hi, Nong [Shanghai dialect for "you"] cannot do this[be a
> team leader] well, Nong is not capable of it [being a team leader]. I tell others you
> [pointing to another learner] can do this.
> Bo: In jokes you together had already made a decision.
> Qiong: Yes.

Qiong said they did not need to be so serious with this kind of nomination. This kind of informal

selection could increase the group cohesion. Yang confirmed that this form of electing the team

leaders also happened in her Chorus program, too.

The facilitators and the team leaders' good temper could soften the conflicts in the

learning cells and strengthen the cohesion of the learning cells. Yang said that their facilitator

was really a nice person: "She treats others very well….The human relationship, you talked to

her, she was always smiling. She has no temper, she never had a bad temper. I think she may not

know what it looks like to have a temper." Lang, as a team leader, said that in her team, they

value group collaboration, which means as a leader, she should be more considerate about

others' feelings and their work and always consider others first:

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Lang: I cared about them [the team members] very much. I put everything they told me into my mind and never forgot it…I was very busy. No matter how busy I was, …I sent messages to them and reminded them [about the things that they needed to do]…I bought birthday cakes for them on their birthdays…They basically told me everything, like friends. They reported everything to me.

Lang was a modest lady. In the interview, her voice was delicate and soft. She vividly yet calmly described her professional team and their learning experiences. Though Lang was a team leader, she did not behave like a traditional leader. Instead, she was more like a big sister in her team, cared about the team members, and gained their trust.

Combing the learning, the rewards, and the entertainment activities together created a happy, energetic and harmonious learning environment. Jiang told me about his experience of attending the entertainment activity organized by the [Bao Shan] street:

Bo: Except the activities in the Baoshan Photography Salon, what other activities did you participate in?

Jiang: I attended the activities organized by the local street. For example, this spring [2008 spring], [the local street organized us in activities such as]Ping-Pang, travel, we [the elderly people] ate together. In the end, we were sent the [holiday] gifts, some sort of encouraging us [by giving us these gifts], they[gifts] were from the street residential committees, the directors of the Women Federation, and these from the salon.

The learners from the salon were provided the entertainment and the leisure activities, and were encouraged by the gifts from the leaders. Leaders from the street and the photography salon sent the holiday gifts to the elderly people in the Photography Salon to encourage their learning and to show the leaders' care and love for the elderly people as well. Some participants also indicated that they enjoyed some of the learning activities very much because those activities incorporated entertainment, media, and education and created a lot of fun. This pleased the learners both emotionally and financially. For example, Hong said that she was encouraged so much when she had an opportunity to talk on TV about her learning experience. In addition to Hong, several other learners with whom I casually chatted within the Zhabei Learning Community also shared their exciting feelings with me about how they performed on TV, about

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what they learned, and about how their learning activities were reported in the newspaper. Chan, a migrant worker, told me the reasons that he had great interest in dragon dance activity in their New Shanghainese Club was because on the one hand, it was interesting and they could travel around Shanghai participating in the Dragon Dance activities; and on the other hand, they could make money. Every time they performed the dragon dance, everyone could earn around 50-100 Yuan [approximately 7.3-14.6 USD]. Chan said he also enjoyed the knowledge competition game in this club because it was energetic, dynamic, and was full of fun; at the same time the winners could get small gifts such as toothpaste and towels, which they needed in their daily life. Shen, another migrant from the same club expressed similar ideas. He said that what impressed him the most in the reading activities [in the Migrant Club] was that learners, from approximately five provinces [including Jiang Su province, Jiangxi province, and An'hui province], were organized to launch the knowledge competition, an activity that incorporates the game format to examine learners to see who learned more new knowledge/information from reading books and newspapers and listening to the local and national news reports. This varied group of people were divided into two large groups for the knowledge competition. Shen was impressed by this type of "reading activity" because it was more like an exciting game where migrant workers from different places competed with each other in a cheerful, lively and exciting environment. Rewarding them with items that the migrant workers needed greatly stimulated their interest in gaining new knowledge, too.

Rewarding the winners in the learning contest is one strategy to create a cheerful learning environment. In some learning cells, rewarding every learner is a different strategy to maintain a harmonious and happy learning environment. Jiang from the Baoshan Photography Club told me how they tried to make everyone happy by rewarding everyone:

> At the end of the year, except for these who did not participate [in the group activities] often, nearly all the members were given awards. You'd better find something [to make everyone happy]. For example, attendance awards, the selection awards, the photo awards, whatever. You must find something. Actually, we all got money, and all were happy. [Otherwise], you make someone upset, and it is not worth it.

In China, competition is appreciated, and those who are excel and are competitive are rewarded. In the Baoshan Photography Salon, the most important thing was to encourage members to participate. The Salon rewards nearly everyone at the end of the year, which creates a happy and harmonious learning environment where members are encouraged to attend the Salon and to share their knowledge and skills.

Some learning cells are more than the physical learning places; they are like a family for the learners. When I visited the Linfen Street Community Culture Center, where the Linfen Community School is situated, I saw that the Center is more like a family-style club, with a Gym, consultation rooms, classrooms, performance rooms, a ballroom, entertainment rooms and a library. The manager of the Center said that many local people liked to stay at the Center every day because the Center was more comfortable physically than their own apartments, and it was also free for the local citizens if they follow the rules of the Center. At the Center, people could meet with their friends, take part in many interesting programs, read in the library, dance in the ballroom, watch free movies, go to the Gym, and then have a shower afterwards. The manager said that many citizens had some bad habits such as smoking, spitting on the ground, and taking advantage of the others. The Center staff was required not to criticize them but to serve them with patience and a warm heart. Two learners from the Center told me that their community school principal was more like their friend than a leader: "She was always there doing something for you, such as closing the window for you if you forgot to do so." When those citizens stayed

in the Center for a period of time, they were influenced by the positive and harmonious environment and gradually changed their bad habits.

Fan from the Sisters Club said that the Women's Federation spent quite a bit of money to sponsor their travel in Shanghai, and the leaders from the Women's Federation traveled with them. She felt that the leaders cared about them very much and that their hearts were closely connected. Fan said that the Sisters Club also organized discussion groups for the migrant wives to casually talk about the difficulties they had or about problems that the club could help solve:

> [In one discussion group], the leaders said: "The club is your home." One of the chairmen also said: "I wish you would regard this [club] as your family." Therefore, for a long period of time, we told them everything, and if we needed them to solve our problems, we just came here. I feel good.

Fan said that since their own hometowns were far from Shanghai, they [migrant wives] regarded this club as their "family" whom they could trust and on whom they could depend.

A harmonious learning environment bound the learners, the instructors and the leaders together and built trust among them. Fan mentioned that during their one-day trip to Shanghai, a leader from the Women's Federation suggested that they sing songs. The atmosphere was very festive, and everyone, including the leaders, sang spontaneously. Fan said: "It was very spontaneous. We chatted freely and honestly. Usually when you are together with a leader with a serious face, you may seldom feel this kind of atmosphere. We were just totally caught up in it". Cultural activities created a light environment that broke the ice, bridged the gap and built trust among the learners, the instructors, and the leaders.

In the Zhabei Learning Community, the harmonious learning environment created cohesion and promoted trust and communication among the learners, the instructors and the leaders, which is a seedbed for proliferating the tacit knowledge and stimulating the collective knowledge.

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Comprehensive Learning Networks

With government support, vertical and horizontal networks were built up to promote lifelong learning in the Zhabei Learning Community. From the previous discussion, we know that the government created a comprehensive network for unemployed workers. Besides this network, there are the other particular networks through which the other groups of participants can access the knowledge and information they need. Comprehensive learning networks stimulated knowledge collaboration in the Zhabei Learning Community.

In the Zhabei Learning Community, the governments tried to create a convenient learning network for everyone in the community to access the knowledge which they wanted to learn. Comparatively, the elderly people, the white collar workers and the leaders had more social networks and enjoyed their learning and life much more than the other groups of participants. The unemployed workers had comparatively fewer networks, and the migrant workers had some random connections but primarily related to other migrants.

Several elderly people I interviewed not only joined the elderly people's associations and got information from these associations, they were also members of their own professional associations and members of some programs provided by the community schools. They had a variety of channels in the community to get plenty of needed information and knowledge. That might be one reason why whenever I asked the people in the Zhabei what were their impressions of the Zhabei Learning Community, most of them immediately thought of the activities provided to the elderly. For example, Jiang, the team leader from the Baoshan Photography Salon, told me he was a member of the Shanghai Elderly People Association and the Shanghai Photography Association. He said if he had more energy, he would attend more associations as he did in the past.

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The leaders had broad networks to access different information and knowledge. They themselves were also capable of exploring more potential networks. Zun, one of the administrative leaders responsible for the labor work at the Shanghai X.Y. Trans. Co., said that he got information mainly through two lines: the hierarchical Union system and the Party Affairs system. Below he described how he got to know people from different organizations and institutions through those two hierarchical systems:

> Zun: Shanghai General Labor Union, Zhabei District Civilization Office, the National General Labor Union…there are several instructors, they care about us and we contact each other quite often. If there are some official announcements in Shanghai, we communicate with each other.
>
> Bo: Basically Zhabei District supervises your enterprise?
>
> Zun: Yes… we also have our upper governmental institutions we have to respect.… Because our country is like this, it is still in control. From the district to the bureau, [it] directly control you. Activities by the Party Affairs Divisions and the Labor Unions are directly carried out [from the top-down]…
>
> Zun: [I got to know people from] enterprises, agents, at the level of the Bureau…We knew each other well…
>
> Bo: You know people from different links in the hierarchical system?
>
> Zun: Yes.
>
> Bo: Mainly through the Labor Union?
>
> Zun: And also through the system of the Party Affairs. Do not resist the system of the Party Affairs. They will not buy it [if you resist them]…I attended the activities with regard to the enterprise business at the beginning.

As a leader, Zun had opportunities to know people from different institutions and to get information and relevant policies mainly through two hierarchical networks: the Labor Union system and the Party Affair system. These two networks [Labor Union system and Party Affair system] are culturally connected to the traditional Chinese top-down political system. That is, the information Zun got was distributed among the networks embedded in the top-down political system. Zun also told me that since their enterprise dealt with issues with other institutions such as the Police Office, they did get a variety of information from those channels, too. He also asked an instructor in the company to collect that information as well as information from the newspapers, journals and the Internet and compile the information into briefings for reference.

Multiple layers of information were collected by Zun and his organization through a variety of networks.

The white collar workers mainly communicate through the professional networks such as the professional learning groups, inside and outside professional meetings, and so on. Lang, from the Shanghai H. B. Power Co., said that the different professional teams quite frequently exchanged working experiences within their companies, and sometimes with the teams from the upper-level companies. Hao, from the same company, said that in order to inspire innovation and find a better method to improve their work collaboratively, the company created an online achievement submission system, through which the different professional teams could apply for projects and submit the projects' reports in this system, sharing their achievements with colleagues within or outside of the companies. This way, the team members not only share their knowledge across the different professional groups within the company but with their colleagues outside of the company.

The employment assistance network that has been discussed in the previous section connects the unemployed, the employed, the labor market, training and learning together, which supported unemployed workers in gaining the knowledge and skills required. Some unemployed workers also engaged in the programs in the community school in order to expand their networks. Hu said that before she lost her job, she worked in the factory and dealt with products everyday and was not very skilled in dealing with people. After she lost her job, she attended the learning activities for the elderly in the Zhabei Community and learned much from those elderly members:

> Don't look down upon those uncles and aunts in the community. They could show you how to work in society, how to deal with human relationships. They could give you their whole heart [if you are learning together with them for a while]…Some of them, though retired, still have social connections and helped me using their connections.

Hu reached out to the local community school and built more connections with the elder learners.

Through these elder learners and their social connections, Hu gained some common knowledge

about how to deal with people and got support in her search for a job. However, some

unemployed workers still need support in building their own networks. For example, Sun got

limited information and struggled in his own small world:

> Bo: Sometimes you need to know how to advertise yourself. Just like singers, some singers' singing skills are at the similar level, but those who repackage themselves may stand out.
>
> Sun: They [the singers] do have some sort of association [to support them], and to have some activities, and gradually become famous. But I need to work, my time is different from theirs.
>
> …
>
> Bo: So after you lost your job, did you communicate with others about how to find a job or how to learn more [job information]?
>
> Sun: I think I did not. I felt at my age [in the 30s]…several of my good friends, they continued their previous work, without being broken [without being laid off] in 1992 [business reform]. I only heard of it, like this. I am not familiar with these.
>
> …
>
> Sun: I do wish it [Sun's career track] was not broken. Being broken is not good at all for you. Cause after you do your work for a longer time, you have an opportunity to be promoted, to have your salary increased. But now, this society…

Like many of the young and single people in their 30s, Sun was isolated from several of his good

friends who already had a stable family and career. He struggled alone trying to rearrange his

life, redesigning his career, and also struggled with deciding on what to study in order to help

him find a better job. He heard fragments of broken information and tried to catch up in this

ever-changing society. He complained that all of these changes caused his career to stall. After

30, Sun's social circles were smaller, and the information he received was limited. Except the

general informative network like the employment network, it seems there are few professional

networks created for unemployed people like Sun to increase their knowledge and level of

information.

The migrant workers had very limited networks to provide them with the information they needed. They randomly communicated limited information with their fellow migrants. For example, Shen, a cleaner from the New Shanghainese Club, depended on a limited and random network to get information:

> Shen: Sometimes when the citizens [in this residential community] saw the trash [on the ground], they would say, come back and clean it. Sometimes it was annoying [by doing this]. To do this job, not like before, [nowadays] they have higher requirements. In the past, the requirements were not that high.
> Bo: What happened? How about in the past years?
> Shen: In the past years, Shanghai did not have such great pressure. Now, the community is attempting to develop a civilized community. [Because] these days, Shanghai wants to become a national advanced city.
> Bo: How did you get this information?
> Shen: I am familiar with the situation here. We all know each other, know people who do the thing I do.
> Bo: Someone told you this?
> Shen: I would ask [someone], are you busy there? They said they were not. Then we ask for information from each other.
> ….
> Bo: What kind of information? Employment or other?
> Shen: They told me which place we could sell discarded steel for a higher price.
> Bo: Where to sell?
> Shen: Yes. Where to sell for a higher price, where to sell easily. More of this type of information.
> Bo: Your friends are from Linfen street [where you live] or other streets?
> Shen: Some are from Pengpu street.

Shen depends on several friends who are doing similar job to get some random business and market information— the events and the policies that might influence his job. He also mentioned that he wanted to do bigger business to improve his quality of life; however, he did not find the right networks that could bring him into that business world he dreamed about:

> Bo: You did not think of having fun with some of your good friends?
> Shen: No one would like to organize this. No one thinks of it. Sometimes we are busy with work. Like these gang of Jiangxi, they do aluminium business and run all over the world. If you do not contact them, they will not come [to visit you].
> Bo: They have more business.
> Shen: Yes, more business, and are always out.
> Bo: They are always out.

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Shen: They are familiar with the whole situation in Shanghai.
Bo: You can make friends with them and get some information from them.
Shen: In terms of information, they won't tell you.
Bo: Why?
Shen: We are not from the same hometown, as friends, we are not together everyday.
Bo: You are not very good friends.
Shen: No. We know each other at the Migrant Home [Now called the New
           Shanghainese Club]. They came and had a look.
…
Bo: Might it be possible that they would share some important information with you?
Shen: I asked them what kind of business they were doing. They said they did building
           materials trade. Then I asked them , "Is it easy to do this business?" They said: "it's
           ok." Then I asked if I could join them, with a joking voice. They said, "you are not
           familiar with this, you cannot do it well."
Bo: But they did this, even though they were novices themselves [in the beginning].
Shen: That's different. To bring us into this business, and show us how to do this, (they
           worried) we would undercut their business.
…
Bo: If the fellows from your hometown have such an opportunity, will they tell
           you?
Shen: Yes. However, the fellows from our hometown do not do this type of   business.
           Every place has a different priority. You see, people from Jiangsu province most of
           time do seafood business, people from Jiangxi do aluminium business, and we
           An'huinese do cleaning work.
…
Bo: You did not think of how to be accepted by the gangs of people from other
           provinces?
Shen: For one thing, [they are]sort of not trusting you.

Only limited information and opportunities were provided to the migrant workers. Shen wanted

to learn other types of business rather than doing cleaning work. However, work boundaries

among migrant workers in Shanghai are traditionally formed among the groups of people from

different regions of China. As noted from interview data, people from Jiangxi do the aluminium

business, and they only accept those from Jiang xi province into their business circles and share

their business information and practical knowledge only with each other. They will not reveal

their traditional primary knowledge and lose their tacit advantage to people from the other

places. Just as Shen said, they don't trust you. If you are not from the same hometown and you

do not share similar customs and regional culture, they treat you as an outsider. Basically, Shen was blocked from the networks built among the other fellows from other regions.

Even the free training information and some of the free programs provided in the community schools were unknown to Shen, and he did not think of participating in them, too. He only wanted to make more money. Sometimes he did not think more about such things [like participating in some programs]. Shen told me migrant life is kind of boring. Sometimes, some of the migrants, who were about in their 40s, were joked: "What are you doing here in Shanghai?" "Nothing. Buying the grocery, cooking, and washing the clothes." Without the networks and the financial support, they are living in their own worlds, and repeated their routine daily lives day-by-day.

The comprehensive networks stimulated knowledge sharing and collaboration. However, the networks among the different groups of people are uneven. Generally speaking, the lower the social positions of the learners, the fewer networks they have and the less knowledge they are able to share. Even for those learners who have more networks, those networks are more professionally focused within certain fields instead of cross-fields. Most of the knowledge sharing and collaboration happened within the learning cells in the local community or within the fellow professional institutions or organizations. There is less communication across the different types of organizations and institutions such as the community schools and the companies in the local community.

Linear And Non-Linear Learning Structures

Traditionally, China is a centralized country, and the idea of hierarchy influences Chinese people's thinking and ways of doing things. The learning community is a pilot to create a comparatively democratic environment to break the traditional hierarchical teacher-centered

educational structure and give learners more freedom to organize and manage their learning activities. In the Zhabei Learning Community, the government nurtured the non-governmental organizations and the learning cells from the grassroots. Though the traditional hierarchical and linear classroom learning is still the dominant learning structure, there appeared several types of the non-hierarchical and non-linear learning structures which greatly proliferated knowledge in the local community. These learning structures include: the rhizomatic learning structure, a totally open learning structure where there is no instructor, and the learning activities are provided mainly in a public place such as a park or a square to attract anyone from the public to join in; the combination of formal classroom learning and informal group learning; the informal interest-based learning group nurtured from the formal classroom programs; and finally, the honeycombed learning structure where several learning cells collaborated together, and the learners within each of those learning cells contributed their strengthens collaboratively.

A typical example of the rhizomatic/open learning structure is the Ground Calligraphy Salon, where there are no instructors at all and the members themselves organized their learning activities. Lin, the group leader of the Salon, told me that their Ground Calligraphy Salon welcomed anyone to join in and to leave any time. There are no demanding requirements and no pressure. On June 3, 2008, Lin and I watched VCDs and some recorded TV programs about the Ground Calligraphy Salon. I viewed a VCD called "The Elderly in Ground Calligraphy" that was broadcast on the [Shanghai] Oriental TV channel and I saw how the Ground Calligraphy Salon was organized and developed. The calligraphers recreated the giant water brush pens, borrowed the idea of "writing with water" from a famous ancient Chinese calligrapher, and applied this method in the current ground calligraphy, which appealed to the public interests and attracted public participation. In the VCDs such as the Youth Summer Camp, the Opening

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Ceremony of the Ground Calligraphy, and 2005 International Learning Community Forum, I saw how people of different ages, from different places, and even from other countries watched the members of the Salon writing calligraphy on the ground, and some even joined the members and practiced ground calligraphy at the site. According to Lin, calligraphy is traditionally an art form in high-brow culture and is usually communicated among the calligraphers. The members of this club connected with the traditional heritage and the modern social life and moved the high-brow culture from indoors to the public square. They adapted high cultural tastes to popular cultural activities, and transferred this adapted culture to the public receivers with a variety of social positions. This phenomenon attracted the media's attention and was broadcasted in a TV program, which further attracted more and more people to participate.

The Ground Calligraphy Salon broke the traditional classroom learning structure and situated their learning activities in public places such as parks, and connected more and more learners from everywhere to learn together. This kind of non-linear open-ended learning structure gave administrators, instructors and learners more free space to explore any potential learning resources, develop a very dynamic learning environment, and create a mechanism to radiate the knowledge to a larger social circle.

Some learning cells are informal groups developed from formal classroom learning settings. Jiang, one of the administrators responsible for the Zhabei Learning Community, said that many of the learning activities are formally organized in the classroom. However, some learners who wanted to develop their learning interest further form learning groups by themselves after finishing their classroom leaning. Compared to classroom learning where the instructors lead the learning activities, those learning groups were mainly organized and led by the learners themselves, and learners in those groups have much more freedom to explore and

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share their knowledge and experiences with each other. The government tried to promote these interest-based learning groups since they are flexible and are more attractive to the learners. Now, nearly every street in the Zhabei Learning Community has this type of learning group.

Some learning cells combined formal classroom learning and informal group learning. For example, Ting, from the West Zhijiang Chorus Program, described how they combined classroom learning and group learning in their program:

> Our model is to nurture group learning based on classroom learning…The participants in the chorus program may be different in different semesters, [however,] the group is fixed, every year it exists. Those who participated in this [Chorus] program [in different semesters] basically belong to this [same Chorus] group. The [Chorus] program is open to everyone. When we have a performance task, we need to rehearse, then we form the chorus group. We have restrictions and rules [for those who want to join in the chorus group]…The program is organized based on the interest, and the group has the task…It is too expensive to organize an [independent] Chorus group…The program, for example, this time, has 15 learners, next time 20. People who do not know each other get to know each other in a program, and then we select the learners from the program to form the Chorus group. Basically all [the other streets] follow this model.

Ting said that in her learning cell, they organized their learning activities in the classroom setting. When there is a performance task for the local community, they selected the learners from the program to form the Chorus group. Every year, some learners left the program after they "graduated," while some still stayed for several years, joining the new programs for the newcomers . Yang's experience confirmed the necessity of maintaining this type of learning structure. She said that she would like to stay in the same Chorus group within the program because she felt there is no end to learning new knowledge from the old members and the new members. The boundary of this mixed learning cell is not fixed, and knowledge is circulated among the old members and the new members.

Some learning cells had a honeycombed learning structure where several learning cells collaborated together, and the learners within each of those learning cells contributed their

knowledge collaboratively. Hao, from the Shanghai H.B. Power Co., said that every year, the professional teams in their company were encouraged to apply for projects as a way to improve their practical work collectively. After the professional teams completed their projects, they submitted their achievements to the online Quality Control system so that the other professionals could also benefit from the results. Within one professional team, members draw upon each others' strengthens and collaboratively work on the projects. The benefit of this type of learning, according to Hao, is that everyone has the opportunity to show his/her knowledge and skills. This type of structure increased the communication among the different learning cells at the same time. Just as Yi, a professional technician from this organization, said, "Because of our cohesion, we are one small chain of this production chain. We are tied together chain by chain. In fact, we have already achieved a certain degree of communication in our working process."

Knowledge and information from different learning cells are shared and are connected collectively within a professional knowledge chain, which greatly contributed to the whole knowledge base of these learning cells.

In summary, in the Zhabei Learning Community, the government's support promoted collaboration among the educational institutions, governmental institutions, enterprises, and non-governmental institutions. This collaboration among the different stakeholders built a platform to open their learning resources to the local people and created a collaborative system to support lifelong learning. Many learning activities in the Zhabei Learning Community had close connections with community development. The learners served the community, transmitting knowledge and the mainstream values to the local community through variable discourses and cultural tools. The learning cells in Zhabei created a harmonious learning environment through many strategies, which strengthened group cohesion and built trust among the learners, the

instructors, and the leaders. Comprehensive learning networks are created for the learners: some are new networks created for or by the learners while some are networks that traditionally existed and were incorporated into the learning community. These networks stimulated knowledge collaboration. However, some groups of learners in lower social positions have fewer networks and need the professional support to explore connections with the outside world. To stimulate the vitality of the learning cells, the government supported non-governmental grassroots organizations to organize the learning cells. Though the traditional linear and hierarchical classroom learning structure was still dominant, there appeared some non-lineal learning structures, too, which greatly promoted knowledge proliferation.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of the study is to understand how knowledge is constructed in a geographical learning community in the Zhabei District of Shanghai, China. The following four questions guided the study: (a) What are the patterns of knowledge construction in the learning community? (b) what are the social-cultural factors that shape the knowledge construction in the learning community? (c) what are the learning community factors that shape the knowledge construction in the learning community? and (d) how do social-cultural and learning community factors together shape the knowledge construction?

Findings from this study indicate that the knowledge construction is a socially embedded collective learning process. In the knowledge construction process, learning community factors such as cultural products, discourses, multi-layer networks and learning structures promote knowledge construction, and socio-cultural factors such as a hierarchical social system, conservative social values, and economic reforms shape knowledge construction. This chapter begins with conclusions and discussion and is followed by the implications for practice and suggestions for future research, .

Conclusions and Discussion

Four conclusions from this study have been generated. First, knowledge construction is a socially embedded collective learning process. Second, cultural products and discourses are tools that promote knowledge construction. Third, multi-layer networks and learning structures shape knowledge construction in the learning community. Fourth, the hierarchical social system, conservative social values, and economic reforms shape knowledge construction in the learning

community.

Conclusion 1: Knowledge Construction is a Socially Embedded Collective Learning Process

In this study of knowledge construction in the Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community, data from the participants show that learning in the Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community is not just an individual cognitive process. It is a collective effort that was socially embedded in community development, in learners' practical works, and in the mundane living world. Learners were situated in the empirical social world to share their knowledge, to generate new knowledge, and to transfer their stocks of knowledge into the sub-social structures such as the local communities, or even beyond the local communities. Learning extended the traditional classroom learning territory. Strategically, learners were immersed in the activities of community management, community services, and the entertainment milieu, which brought learners back to the mundane world from where knowledge derives, and connected learners—the individual knowledge carriers—to a larger body of knowledge carriers. In this study, five patterns of knowledge construction were derived from the data. These patterns are: radiation, circulation, simulation, socialization, and contextualization.

These patterns concretize Berger and Luckmann's (1967) knowledge construction theory and emphasize the different aspects of learning in the knowledge construction process, which includes knowledge externalization, objectivation, and internalization. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), society exists as both objective and subjective reality, which "is understood in terms of an ongoing dialectical process composed of the three moments of externalization, objectivation, and internalization" (p.129). In the knowledge construction process, externalization refers to how a person "projects his own meanings into reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 104). In other words, externalization in the knowledge construction process

refers to how people with different perspectives interact with each other, access the knowledge stocks of others, share the common stocks of knowledge and make their subjective knowledge explicit. Objectivation refers to how empirical knowledge is generated into objective knowledge. Specifically, objectivation in knowledge construction process refers to how people in interaction form the typifications for the activities in which they engage, habitualize these typifications into their institutionalized roles, and routinize these roles into the institutional knowledge. This institutionalized knowledge legitimates the objective reality. Internalization means "the immediate apprehension or interpretation of an objective event as expressing meaning, that is, as a manifestation of another's subjective processes which thereby becomes subjectively meaningful to myself" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p.129). In other words, internalization in the knowledge construction process refers to how people crystallize the objective knowledge into individuals' consciousness and translate it into individuals' subjective worlds. Knowledge construction is generally a process of how subjective empirical knowledge is collectively generated into the objective knowledge (pre-theoretical, or even theoretical knowledge) and is finally transferred to and internalized by the subjective individuals.

Radiation is a process of how individuals' subjective knowledge transfers to the public. In order to connect the individual learners and the pubic, the knowledge transferred should be relevant to the public's life since people usually have more interest in knowledge that has relevant connections to their lives. In addition, there is a pivot or tool that connects the relevant knowledge among the learners and the public.

Arts and popular culture play an important role in facilitating social interaction by way of serving as a common topic for conversation (Lizardo, 2006). In the Zhabei Learning Community, arts and media are social interaction tools in the radiation pattern that connect the individuals'

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knowledge to the public interest. The members of the Baoshan Photograph Salon used their

photographs to interact with the local people, took pictures for the local people, preserved the

local community heritage, documented the local historical moments via their photographs, and

extended their individual photography knowledge to the local community.

Language is embedded in the daily life experiences and reflects the local culture, custom,

and social-economic structure. "An understanding of language is thus essential for any

understanding of the reality of everyday life" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p.37). For the migrant

workers in Shanghai, language is an important passport for them to become immersed in

Shanghai society. Through the medium of television, Hong's story about how she learned

language and how this language learning changed her life was broadcast to the public and

aroused the interest of other migrant women who also want to be involved in Shanghai society

using the passport of language.

Through the nodes that tie the different stocks of knowledge, individual learners and the

public are connected. Knowledge from individuals thus proliferates among the public. Lizardo's

(2006) research about the relations between culture consumption (highbrow and popular) and

network ties (strong and weak) indicates that popular culture has a positive impact on weak-tie

networks but not on strong-tie networks, while highbrow culture consumption selectively

increases strong-tie density but has no significant effect on weak ties. In order to transfer

calligraphy knowledge and the ideas embedded in the art of calligraphy to the public, Lin and his

members from the Calligraphy Salon created a new mechanism of calligraphy writing that could

connect the weak-tie networks and strong-tie networks, and tie the different groups of people in

different social positions together. Instead of using small calligraphy brush writing inside rooms

and communicating with a small group of professional calligraphers who are the master of the

calligraphy knowledge, Lin and his members moved calligraphy writing from the inside to the outside to connect more people who have different learning purposes. They created giant brushes that are more comfortable to use and easier to handle for the non-professional outsiders. By creating a new mechanism of calligraphy writing, Lin and his members broke the barriers of the highbrow culture— calligraphy, which is usually inaccessible to non-professional outsiders. This type of learning created a communication platform for the professional calligraphers and the non-professional outsiders and connected multiple knowledge carriers interested in calligraphy.

The pattern of radiation shows how learning connects the relevant stocks of knowledge in multiple directions through hubs or nodes. Cultural products such as ground calligraphy, newspaper, and TV played an important role in the radiation process. Individual learning became a collective activity and influenced the other people in or outside of the local community. This radiation process bonded the individuals with the public together and created a communication platform for the learners and the public.

The second pattern, circulation, reflects how people access sub-dimensions of objective knowledge and internalize this knowledge into their consciousness. According to social constructionists, reality is divided by the social structures, or the institutions. Every social structure, or institution, has its own stock of knowledge, which is composed of the subcategories of that stock of knowledge. "Such knowledge constitutes the motivating dynamics of institutionalized conduct" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p.65). In order to know one type of institutional knowledge, learners access or circulate around the inner dimensions or subcategories of that stock of knowledge and internalize them.

The reality of Shanghai, composed of such things as its science, culture, history, custom, and politics, is embedded in its sub-social realities such as the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall, Bund Sightseeing Tunnel, the Pudong new area, the restaurants, some big companies' opening ceremonies, etc. The one-day-trip to Shanghai organized for the Sisters' Club provided the migrant women the opportunities to experience the historical and modern aspects of Shanghai. Each dimension of Shanghai reality is embodied in the empirical subunits of Shanghai such as the Bund Sightseeing Tunnel and The Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall. The detailed interpretation of the sights by the tour guide displayed to the migrant workers the knowledge of Shanghai embodied in these subunits. The New Shanghainese Club used similar strategies to support migrant workers in getting to know Shanghai society better. Using the Dragon Dance as an interaction tool, the migrant workers from the New Shanghainese Club not only traveled around to the sightseeing attractions of Shanghai, like the migrant women in the Sisters Club, but also entered the higher level social life of Shanghai through activities such as attending the big companies' opening ceremonies and got to know the custom and the lifestyle of Shanghai.

Social structure "is an essential element of the reality of everyday life" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p.33). The society is divided, based on the labor divisions, into different structural institutions. These institutions have their subunits, their own stocks of knowledge and subcategory knowledge. The migrant workers from the Sisters' Club and the New Shanghainese Club knew the macro-Shanghai society by circulating among its subunits.

Another example of circulation is Wan's experience at the D. N. Community Affairs Center. Employment policy is one type of institutional knowledge that involves not only the knowledge of employment but also the knowledge of payment, the knowledge of accident

medical treatment, etc. In dealing with a big employment case in which a newly-freed prisoner was employed but was discriminated against by his employer who did not want to pay his welfare and his medical expenses, Wan checked every aspect of the employment policy. Since this was a complicated case that covered knowledge from other fields, Wan consulted some policy experts about the prisoner's rights and visited relevant experts to define the dimensional knowledge about accident affairs and medical treatment. The body of knowledge on employment policy is constituted by its subcategory knowledge that is immersed in several other fields. Dealing with one complicated employment policy case enabled Wan to access to the multiple dimensions of the knowledge database of employment policy. After she visited the people, experts, and social institutions relevant to the multi-dimensional knowledge of employment policy, Wan gained an authentic knowledge of the employment policy.

This circulation pattern is especially useful for gaining certain knowledge by engaging in its multiple dimensions. Each dimension, like a mini-knowledge base, is embedded in the social reality. By socially interacting with each dimension in its practical entity, learners gradually make sense of this type of knowledge.

The third pattern, simulation, is one type of internalization in the process of knowledge construction. Learners apprehend or interpret others' knowledge that has a similar or relevant structure with their own.

"An important element of my knowledge of everyday life is the knowledge of relevance structures of others" (Berger & Luckmann, p.45). In everyday life, people learn some social stock of knowledge that has relevance to theirs. Simulation is about how people gain knowledge that has similar or relevant connections to theirs through a process of observation, imitation and adaptation. This learning process is similar to Bandura's socio-cultural learning theory about

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how people learn the behaviors and attitudes through observing or imitating the modeling, and learn which responses are most appropriate in which settings, and how new behaviors are formed (Bandura, 1977). Interview data show that some participants simulated knowledge that has relevant structures with theirs from daily life and from people around them. Examples from Qiong in the Fashion Show program and Chau from H. B. Power Co. indicate that simulation is a process of observing the significant features of the modeled behavior, refining and improving the observed behavior, and adjusting the learned behavior based on their own situations. For example, Qiong told me how he adapted observed daily-life walks into his catwalk: "They (daily life-walk and catwalk) are both very similar. The catwalk is more exaggerated. The real catwalk is simulated from life, and is refined and improved." Chau, as an administrative official, trained his sense of human relations by observing the significant features relevant to the human relations, such as languages people used, their body languages, and their different reactions to the same issues. Then he connected his work with what he observed, imitated the strategies used, and adapted these strategies in his work.

Berger and Luckmann (1976) assumed that "the social stock of knowledge as a whole has its own relevance structure" (p.45). Data from Qiong at the Fashion Show Program indicate that in the simulation process, from observing the catwalk of other catwalk groups, he saw clearly what steps he missed. In other words, Qiong knew the whole picture of the key structure of the catwalk and understood which parts in this picture were missing. Data from Qiong and Yang also indicate that one important factor in the simulation process is that the knowledge structure of the observed and the observers should have some similarities, and the knowledge gap between the observed and the observers should not be too large.

To be able to access the knowledge carriers and to enable them to share the knowledge safely are also important factors in the simulation process. Cross, Parker, Prusak and Borgatti's (2001) research showed that to gain knowledge from groups, four requirements are needed: (a) knowledge of the other person's expertise and when to turn to him or her; (b) the ability to access that person; (c) the willingness of persons who have expertise to engage in problem solving; and (d) safety in the relationship. Similar to this research conclusion, the data in this study showed that in the simulation process, to gain the relevant knowledge from others efficiently, learners need to know who has the expertise from which they could gain, and how to access these "experts" and to make the "experts" feel safe to show the key structures of their knowledge. Hu, Gu and Chau's experiences give some sketches of how to create a safe and trustful learning environment from the individual aspect. From the individual aspect, Chau thought that trust, respect, and love are important factors that enable the mentors to show the apprentices their tacit knowledge. He said that you need to touch the emotional part of the mentors and treat them like your father.

The simulation pattern is especially useful for gaining analogous knowledge, knowledge that has similar or relevant structures between the observers and the observed. Learners can simulate knowledge from people, daily life, and from the media. Generally, simulation is a process of observing the empirical knowledge from the reality, imitating it, and adapting it to the new context. Three factors are identified from data that are important in simulation process: the similar knowledge structure of the observed and the observers, learners' ability to access to knowledge carriers, and the knowledge carriers' willingness to share the knowledge safely.

Socialization, the fourth pattern generated from the data, is part of internalization in the process of knowledge construction. According to Berger and Luckmann (1976), socialization is

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"the comprehensive and consistent induction of an individual into the objective world of a society or a sector of it" (p.130). The objective world is an ordered and institutionalized world, a world that is coded and typified by people with a variety of perspectives. Specifically, people in interactions form the typifications for the activities they engage in, habitualize these typifications into their institutionalized roles, and routinize these roles into the institutional knowledge. The pattern of socialization shows how people make sense of the objective world in social interaction, and adapt to this objective world. It is one aspect of learning, internalization, in the knowledge construction process.

Berger and Luckmann (1976) identify three types of socialization: primary socialization, secondary socialization, and resocialization. Primary socialization "creates in the child's consciousness a progressive abstraction from the roles and attitudes of specific others to roles and attitudes in general" (p. 132). It is the beginning for children to face the objective reality and to learn the social roles and behaviors required. Secondary socialization refers to "the internalization of institutional or institution-based ' subworlds '" (p.138). It happens particularly when people start to adapt to the career-based institutions and learn the institutional roles and behaviors. In resocialization, individuals internalize new norms, values and skills in a new context. Resocialization is similar to the primary socialization but occurs in a new social structure or new context (Berger & Luckmann, 1976). It happens when people enter a new reality and learn the new social roles and behaviors in order to adapt to that reality. In this study, the pattern of socialization refers to resocialization. "In re-socialization the past is reinterpreted to conform to the present reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1976, p.163). That is, the individuals need to transform themselves to a new social context and reinterpret their past based on the new social structure.

Since the 1980s, economic reform in China dramatically changed the social and economic structures of China. Many workers were laid off, and hundreds of thousands of people from the rural areas migrated to the urban areas. The Zhabei Learning Community provided a series of programs to support and guide people in the local community to adapt to the changed social context.

Language is an important factor in the socialization process. A new social context usually legitimates the outsiders from the insiders via language. Language and its vocabularies are socially developed within the local context. "Language is capable not only of constructing symbols that are highly abstracted from everyday experience, but also of 'bringing back' these symbols and appresenting them as objectively real elements in everyday life" (Berger & Luckmann, 1976, p. 40). It embodies the social norms and culture of the local context. "An understanding of language is thus essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life" (Berger & Luckmann, 1976, p.37). Shanghai dialect implies its own institutionalized norms and culture and differentiates those outsiders from the local Shanghainese. The Sisters Club provided Shanghai dialect instruction to the migrant workers to support them in adapting to Shanghai society. For Hong and the other migrant workers, learning and speaking Shanghai dialect is not only for good communication, it also supports them in becoming involved in their new society. With the support from the Sisters Club, Hong learned the basics of the Shanghai dialect and then practiced it in the routines of daily life such as market bargaining. She socially interacted with daily life practice via Shanghai dialect, and gradually immersed herself in Shanghai society. Through language interaction in everyday life, the Shanghai culture and norms embedded in those daily-life practices were unconsciously internalized in Hong's mind and helped her to reframe and reinterpret her new social roles and positions in Shanghai. The benefit she got from

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the Shanghai dialect informed her that to learn Shanghai dialect is a move in the right direction to adapt to Shanghai society.

Successful socialization means "the establishment of a high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality (as well as identity, of course)" (Berger & Luckmann, 1976, p. 163). The discrepant versions of the objective realities provided to the learners may cause their unsuccessful socialization. This happened in Sun's resocialization process. Sun, like Hong, a migrant from another province, was not very successful in his resocialization process due to the discrepant versions of the objective realities provided to him. At the beginning, guided by one administrator who cared about him very much, Shen participated in the learning activities provided by the New Shanghainese Club to adapt to Shanghai society. Being involved in the mundane world, participating in activities such as community volunteer work and visiting many places in Shanghai revealed to him a positive aspect of Shanghai society. However, later, the leaders and the administrators changed. They organized the club in a bureaucratic way. Some new officials' bureaucratic actions in the learning activities ruined Shen's trust in the leaders and the instructors. He doubted that the programs provided by the club could support him in adapting to Shanghai society. His socialization process backfired due to the discrepant versions of the new objective realities exposed to him.

The experience from Sun, once a laid-off worker, indicates that in the complicated situation when the social structure changed dramatically, specialized agencies may have to be developed to support individuals in their adjustment to the new objective reality. Economic reform in China dramatically changed the original social structure where Sun lived. The changed social structure follows the market economic rules that replaced the planned economic model in nearly every sector of the society. The changed structure correspondingly required a series of changes

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not only in the practical reality such as the employment market, but also in terms of changed values and beliefs. Without getting support from significant others or particular agencies to guide him in adapting to his new context, Sun got lost in his resocializaiton process. He had no idea where to go, from whom he could acquire information, or what kind of knowledge and skills he needed to obtain. His subjective reality still remained at the base of the original social structure and he could not find his new position in the new social context.

In the resocialization process, significant others play an important role in showing the individuals the objective reality and its relevant roles and behaviors, guiding them to the structure of the new reality, and mediating for them to adapt to the new reality. These significant others "represent the plausibility structure in the roles they play vis-à-vis the individual…, and they mediate the new world to the individual" (Berger & Luckmann, 1976, p.157). The individuals need to intensely interact with these significant others in groups that embody the structure of the new reality. In Sun's case, he failed to interact with his close friends and other professionals who are successful in the new employment market nor did he get support from the professional agencies that are familiar with the multi-layer aspects of the new society, such as the socio-economic structure of the new society, the roles and qualifications required by the new employment market, the learning and training resources available, etc.

The pattern of socialization is basically a social interaction practice through which the individuals are guided into the new social structure, its relevant norms, rules, culture, and the skills and knowledge needed to support them in adapting to the new context. In order for the socialization pattern to be effective, the individuals should be provided a consistent rather than a discrepant version of the new social context; the individuals should be provided the consultant services needed in order to clear the barriers in their resocialization process; it is necessary for

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significant others and agencies to guide the individuals in gaining the knowledge and skills needed, and to facilitate the individuals' involvement in the everyday social activities in order to become familiar with the new context.

The fifth knowledge construction pattern, contextualization, is also a socially embedded collective process. Contextualization is based on the rational of how knowledge is objectivated from the empirical reality to the pre-theoretical or theoretical level in the knowledge construction process. Knowledge objectivation shows how the subjective reality is reified, or dehumanized into an objective reality. Reification "can be described as an extreme step in the process of objectivation, whereby the objectivated world loses its comprehensibility as a human enterprise and becomes fixated as a non-human, non-humanizable, inert facticity" (Berger & Luckmann, 1976, p.89).

According to Berger and Luckmann (1976), the more complex the theories are, the more detached they are from their original subjective context. Contextualization traces back to where knowledge comes from and situates knowledge in the local authentic context and guides people to generate the empirical tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge—knowledge that is coded and could be articulated and transferred to the public explicitly, or to adjust the explicit knowledge according to the local context, or to learn the explicit knowledge in the local context. In the knowledge construction practice, multiple perspectives are involved. "Each perspective,…will be related to the concrete social interests of the group that holds it. … Especially on the theoretical level, it is quite possible for knowledge to attain a great deal of detachment from the biographical and social interests of the knower "(Berger & Luckmann, 1976, p.86). In order to support the learners in understanding the rational of how knowledge is derived, and how to generate it and

internalize it, it is a good strategy to situate knowledge in its empirical social context and to gain or to create or to adjust it through social interaction in the local authentic context.

Contextualization could be generating the empirical tacit knowledge collectively from the practical work and objectivating this empirical tacit knowledge into the explicit knowledge. Data from Hao, a white-collar worker from the Shanghai H. B. Power Co., show that her professional group's various perspectives on the best technical solutions and methods drawn from their practical work were pooled together, were negotiated, and were finally published in the online QC (Quality Control) system and became explicit knowledge shared with the public. In this process, the subjective individuals' particular stocks of tacit knowledge drawn from the empirical practice were objectivated into the explicit knowledge.

Contextualization could also be adjusting the explicit knowledge according to the local context. "On the pretheoretical level, however, every institution has a body of transmitted recipe knowledge, that is, knowledge that supplies the institutionally appropriate rules of conduct" (Berger & Luckmann, 1976, p.65). In other words, the institutionalized knowledge, or the knowledge that has been theorized and coded represents the institutional order and controls the institutional roles and actions. However, the institutionalized knowledge is not fixed. It dynamically changes according to the specific context. Xun, who mainly dealt with welfare policy issues, said that most of the time, he and his colleagues followed the current policy to solve problems. However, sometimes the real situation was more complicated and was beyond the scope of current policies. They usually adjusted the current policies to fit the local context. Generally, the current welfare policy as institutionalized knowledge decides what actions Xun and his colleagues should take in dealing with their practical work. However, there are always elements of subjective reality in welfare issues that have not been objectivated and could not be

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legitimately explained by the current objective welfare policy; that is, the current institutionalized policy covered the issues present in most situations and guided Xun and his colleagues in dealing with the welfare issues. However, in real life, some issues were beyond the current policy, which required the practitioners and the policy makers to adjust the current welfare policies to fit the local context. The knowledge adjustment originated from the practical work and was specifically constructed in the local context.

Contextualization could be learning the explicit knowledge by situating this knowledge in the practical work. For example, instead of internalizing the institutionalized welfare policies by reciting them, Wan and her colleagues learned the welfare policies by participating in role-play games, which were created based on the actual practical cases occurring in their work. These role-play games about the welfare policies were embedded in daily life and practical work and are attached to the learners' subjective world, which makes it easier for the learners to internalize the knowledge of welfare policy.

Literally, contextualization means situating something in the local context. The reason for doing so is because we try to close the gap between the subjective reality and the objective reality, a reality that is abstracted from the empirical subjective reality and is detached from the individuals' subjective world. It is necessary to objectivate the subjective empirical knowledge into the objective knowledge, which legitimately guides our social and institutional behaviors and actions. For the learners who are not involved in this knowledge objectivation process and would like to internalize this knowledge, it is a strategy to bring learners back to the empirical world where this knowledge is situated. Additionally, contextualization is not only a strategy for learning knowledge, it also means creating knowledge in an authentic context, or adjusting

knowledge to enable it to fit the local context. All of these efforts of contextualization attach to the social and empirical world where knowledge originates, and involve social interactions.

In conclusion, based on Berger and Luckmann's (1967) theory about knowledge construction, I have generated five patterns of knowledge construction from data. These five patterns concretize and explicate Berger and Luckmann's (1967) theory of social constructionism. Each pattern emphasizes one particular aspect of knowledge construction. These patterns include the elements of interaction and adaptation and indicate knowledge construction is socially imbedded in the empirical world and is generally a collective activity.

Conclusion 2: Cultural Products And Discourses Are Tools That Promote Knowledge

Construction

Knowledge construction emphasizes collaboration and shared meanings (Ernest, 1995). A learning community is supposed to create a learning environment to empower learners to express their ideas freely, respect the different voices, and value mutual engagements in the learning activities (Bersch & Lund, 2002; Janov, 1995; Lawrence, 2002; Lieberman, 2000; Martiny, 1998; Moore & Brooks, 2000; Pereles, Lockyer & Fidler, 2002). In the Zhabei Learning Community, the street/town education committee offices organize the cultural performances and the learning campaigns in the streets and the neighborhoods, collaborating with the Culture and Education Division, the neighborhood committee, the community schools and the organizations and institutions in the local community. The community schools and some learning organizations and institutions used culture and discourse as tools in the learning activities to create a collaborative and harmonious learning environment and to magnify the effect of knowledge construction. Culture and discourse played an important role in promoting knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning Community.

Cultural Products

Culture as a tool shapes knowledge construction. The concept of culture has multiple meanings. According to Parsons and Shils's (1954) typology, culture can be of three types: (a) culture as a symbol system or products such as film, music, and painting; (b) culture as a value system that affects people's actions and directs them to some ends; and (c) culture as an evaluation system, or orientation to action, or a way of life. In this section, culture refers to the first type: (cultural) products. Cultural products such as photographs, ground calligraphy, cultural performances, activities, and exhibitions, and TV programs have been widely applied to promote knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning Community.

Culture was used as a prop to deliver the hidden knowledge to the local community (Lawrence, 2005). This is especially reflected in the Golden Dream Fashion Show program, in which the learners made their costumes out of paper, used CD's and discarded plastic in their performances to transfer to the local citizens the knowledge of recycling and reusing discarded materials and to raise their awareness of environment protection. According to the description of Li, the instructor of the Golden Dream Fashion Show program, the Golden Dream Fashion Team designed and played their performances for the local community to transfer the ideas of social responsibilities, general social knowledge, and mainstream moral values to the local citizens. This knowledge was embedded in the cultural performances and was expected to imperceptibly influence the local people.

Culture functioned as a bridge that built a communication platform for learners and the public, extended the learners' knowledge to the broader knowledge carriers and connected the learners and the public together. Data from the learners in the Ground Calligraphy, the Sisters Club and the New Shanghainese Club show that, supported by the cultural products, knowledge

was transferred to the multiple receivers. The receivers included individual migrant workers who obtained knowledge of Shanghai, the community citizens who were informed about the general social and scientific knowledge and the mainstream morals and values, and the public that was nurtured by the traditional culture. Learning occurs in the process of appreciating, creating, planning, and reflecting the cultural products. In some learning cells, high-brow culture such as calligraphy was mediated to cater to the public's tastes and needs. The mediated high-brow culture broke its narrow territory and connected to the public and extended the knowledge from the individual learners to the public, which indirectly reflects Lizardo's (2006) research about the relationships between culture consumption (highbrow and popular) and network ties (strong and weak). Lizardo's research findings suggested that popular culture has a positive impact on weak-tie networks (ties among close friends and family, etc.) but not on strong-tie networks (ties among strangers), while highbrow culture (elite culture) consumption selectively increases strong-tie density but has no significant effect on weak ties. The cultural product such as ground calligraphy was a node that connected the learners and the public and created a radiating learning circle after it was mediated from high-brow culture.

Culture affects people's actions by stressing its relevant/external meaning (Swidler, 1995). In some learning cells in the Zhabei Learning Community, in order to connect to the public and to have an impact on the local community, culture extended its internal esthetic meaning and developed its external meanings. The ground calligraphy developed its external meanings by closely connecting to the needs of modern urban people, the local community development and the mainstream values. For example, the members of the Ground Calligraphy wrote about current affairs and wrote traditional poems in public places to inform the local people of the news and the historical heritage. The Ground Calligraphy was used as a tool to

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transfer its external social meaning in addition to broadcasting its internal aesthetic meaning. In the process of learning photography skills, the members of the Baoshan Photograph Salon used their photographs to preserve the local community heritage, documented the local historical moments, and served people in disadvantaged situation, which extended the external meanings of the photography and connected learners' learning to community development.

In the Zhabei Learning Community, culture was used as a lubricant in creating a spontaneous learning atmosphere and provided a platform for dynamic interactions among the learners, instructors, and leaders in the local community, which is important for knowledge sharing and construction. In some learning cells in the Zhabei Learning Community, especially in the learning cells for the elderly, the members organized travels, parties, cultural performances and exhibitions, which created these informal, unstructured, and yet bounded learning cells and promoted group cohesion and interactions among learners, instructors, and leaders. This light and unstructured environment is a seedbed for developing more new and shared knowledge. Cultural activities smoothed the tensions among the learners, the instructors, and the government leaders, and bridged the gap between the performers and the audience.

Culture as a tool magnified the effect of the knowledge being shared, accepted and proliferated within or outside of the community. Some cultural performances and exhibitions were used by the governments and the educators to publicize mainstream values and ideas, general social knowledge and some policies in the local community. For example, learning experiences from Hong in the Sisters Club were made into a local TV program and motivated more migrant wives to follow in her steps. The artful tools such as pictures, calligraphy, and the TV programs were applied in the learning cells where Jiang and other elderly people learn. The mainstream values, the general social knowledge, and knowledge generated from these cells

were propagated to the public via cultural products such as photos, calligraphy, and TV programs. Zhu (2005) suggested that culture should be the spirit of the learning community that connects community development issues together and transforms the community values into residents' good behaviors and actions. In the Zhabei Learning Community, knowledge was embedded in the cultural products and was expected to imperceptibly influence the local people through the media of the culture.

Culture was used as a toolkit with which new knowledge was created. In the previous chapter, I discussed five knowledge construction patterns that occurred in some learning cells. It is necessary to point out that in addition to these five patterns, one special knowledge construction pattern: composition, appeared in the Sisters Club. In the pattern of composition, the new knowledge is constructed by applying what Swidler (1986) described as a toolkit "from which actors select differing pieces for constructing lines of action" (p. 277). During a one-day-trip in Shanghai, the members of the Sisters Club collaboratively composed a doggerel using the format of the folk culture--Shandong patter (or fast clapper speech, Kuai ban in Chinese), a folk culture in Shandong province in China. In a spontaneous atmosphere, members from the Sisters Club selected some of their travel stories, grabbed the pieces of the local folk cultures from other regions and incorporated all of these "ingredients" into a structural mold— Shandong patter. That is, they constructed a new doggerel with the Shandong patter as the basic structure, and their travel stories and the pieces of the other local folk cultures as the contents. The original meaning of this culture format did not exist any more. Culture was used as a toolkit from which some pieces were selected to compose new knowledge. Though it is a random way of creating new knowledge, it reflects how learners explored and exchanged their tacit knowledge embodied

in learners' cultural heritages and collaboratively composed new knowledge with the cultural toolkits.

Discourse

In the Zhabe Learning Community, discourse also plays an important role in knowledge construction practice. It is used by the institutions and powerful social groups to control and formulate the knowledge and disseminate the constructed knowledge to the public.

Discourse is language that is constructed according to the social context. This structured language, including images, stories, statements, representations, etc., produces "a particular version of events" (Burr, 1995, p. 48), which serves a discursive context. Discourse is not only about language. Scott (1988) thinks that "discourse is not a language or a text but a historically, socially, and institutionally specific structure of statements, terms, categories, and beliefs" (p. 35). That is, discourses are the structured statements, categories or beliefs produced through language, under which lie certain power, values, cultures, norms, etc. For Foucault, discourse "illustrates how language gathers itself together according to socially constructed rules and regularities that allow certain statements to be made and not others" (St. Pierre, 2000, p. 485).

Discourse controls people through a variety of strategies. Dijk (1997) has suggested several strategies, among which the following four strategies have been used in some learning cells in the Zhabei Learning Community: controlling text and talk, controlling the multiple resources, controlling context, and controlling discourse structure. In the first strategy, controlling text and talk, "Instead of controlling the activities of others directly by bodily force, we control the mental basis of all action, … namely people's intentions or purposes" (p.17). Dijk suggests that through text and talk, we shape people's minds and make people believe that they

act the way we want out of their own will instead of through commands, requests or advice from others.

A second strategy is controlling the multiple resources. We control people's minds through maneuvering multiple resources such as "education, information campaigns, propaganda, the media, and many other forms of public discourse" (Dijk, 1997, p.19). Powerful groups not only control " scarce material resources but also symbolic ones, such as knowledge, education, fame, respect and indeed public discourse itself " (p.20). In doing so, the powerful "are thus able not only to control communicative events, but also to set the agenda, to define the situation and even the details of the ways groups, actions and policies are represented" (p.22).

The third strategy is controlling context. Dijk (1997) said that the powerful groups **"**may simply control the context by controlling the participants and their roles: who may be present, who may speak or listen, and who may speak (or must speak) as what" (p.21).

The fourth strategy is controlling the structure of discourse . This includes deconstructing or redefining the meaning of the events, such as using the words "terrorist" instead of "freedom fighter" or vise versa, according to the different context; preferring a specific language or genre, and emphasizing "all information that portrays them positively, and to de-emphasize the information that does so negatively" (Dijk, 1997, p.22). That is, we may use the positive words to frame the events that we support and to emphasize the information that is good for our purposes, or vise versa.

In some learning cells in the Zhabei Learning Community, discourse was used to screen knowledge by controlling text and talk. In the Zhabei Learning Community, many learning cells are given more power to manage their learning activities. In addition to providing the learning activities to the individual learners, these learning activities also served the community under the

discourse of creating a "harmonious learning community." To create a harmonious learning community is in accordance with the enterprise of creating "a harmonious society" by the central government. Any action that supports the discourse of "harmonious learning community" was encouraged. Government publicized the idea of creating a harmonious lifelong learning community in texts such as newspapers, TV news, and a variety of official documents and indirectly shaped people's minds. Some learning cells reacted to the discourse of "harmonious learning community" and directed their members' actions through controlling the texts, too. For example, Lin from the Ground Calligraphy said that their Ground Calligraphy regulations required the members to follow the social rules to broadcast mainstream values and information and not to write anti-society words. The Ground Calligraphy regulations as written texts were one of the channels that sent the message to the members of the Ground Calligraphy about what knowledge and information should be broadcast. Lin said that their members wrote in public places about current affairs such as "Welcome Wu, BoXiong, Guomingdang Chairman (from Taiwan), " "Welcome Beijing Olympic Games," which is positive news accepted by mainstream media. The words they should write, the actions they should take should be consistent with the discourse of maintaining a harmonious and stable learning community. Knowledge shared in these collective learning activities is screened through the discourse of a harmonious learning community.

Some learning cells in the Zhabei Learning Community used discourse as a tool to disseminate knowledge to the public through maneuvering the multiple available resources and framing the discursive structure of the knowledge to be publicized in a way that could be accepted willingly by the public. For instance, data from Lian at the Shanghai H.B. Power company indicate that in order to transfer to the local community knowledge about scientific and

safe electricity, Lian and his colleagues framed the structure of a series of learning events under the discourse of "Bright action of the youth." *Bright* is a positive word to represent the meaning of bright electricity, and *youth* means the members participating in this campaign are young people, indicating they not only brought electric knowledge but vitality to the community. The organizers used the multiple available resources and provided many services to produce a dynamic interactive learning atmosphere. These resources and services included consultation, support for students in difficulty, help in the retirement homes, etc. By framing the structure of the learning events with a positive name — "Bright action of the youth," and by maneuvering a variety of resources and services, Lian and his colleagues created more opportunities to engage in communication with the local people and increase the trust between them and the local people. These activities built a positive image of the Shanghai H.B. Power company and strengthened the local people's willingness to accept the Shanghai H.B. Power Company's campaign about how to use electricity scientifically and safely.

Some learning cells in the Zhabei Learning Community propagandized certain discourse within the organizations by incorporating the multiple resources, launching a series of discourse agendas, and framing the structure of the discourse with specific words. People influenced by this discourse accepted some knowledge that discourse stressed and constrained some knowledge beyond the range of what the discourse proposed. The Shanghai H.B. Power Company used circulatory discursive agendas to promote a sense of safe power and strengthen the employees' knowledge of safe electricity. According to Lang, a white-collar worker from the Shanghai H.B. Power company, under the discourse of "safe power," a series of "safety" activities have been designed and launched in the Shanghai H.B. Power Company, including: (a) a variety of meetings and activities to raise the employees' safety awareness such as having safety technique

supervision meetings; reading and discussing the safety problems reported in the company

briefing; sharing the safety experience, learning safe procedures repeatedly; holding the Friday

safety routine meeting and the Friday summary, reflection and sharing about the safety work;

holding the security staff's safety net meeting; implementing online interaction with the leaders

to check the safety issues; and arranging thematic activities such as 100 self-examining safety

questions and safety power activities in Spring; and (b) a variety of activities to strengthen the

employees' safety techniques such as. a weekly safety technique routine meeting to learn and

share the technical problems reported in the company briefings; the Friday safety technique

working summary, reflection and sharing; the employees' leading of the safety technique

discussion; and the teams' collective design of the safety training packages.

All of these safety-oriented activities surrounded every employee in the Shanghai H.B.

Power Company through multiple resources such as meetings, training sessions, reading the

company briefs, discussions, working summary and reflection, thematic activities, leader-

employees working evaluation, and knowledge self-checks. These multiple discursive agendas

sent a message of safety to every employee consciously and unconsciously, shaped the

employees' minds, and made them believe that it is an honor for everyone to contribute to safe

power. The sense of safety gradually became a culture of the company and was used to guide the

employees' actions and their roles in their work. With the powerful discursive agendas, the

employees gradually imposed safety awareness in their minds and transformed this awareness

into their routine work. More importantly, the discourse of safe power influenced which

knowledge was privileged. Data from Yu, a white collar worker in the Shanghai H.B. Power

Company, confirmed that in dealing with the technical problems in their routine practical work,

Yu and her colleagues would rather accept their mentors' conventional methods rather than take

a risk in trying a new and untested method, since the company emphasized "safe power" instead of "creative power." Usually their mentors' conventional methods had been tested as good for dealing with most of the technical problems. The discourse of safe power determined that knowledge that guaranteed safe power instead of creative power was privileged.

In summary, in the Zhabei Learning Community, cultural products such as photography, ground calligraphy, TV programs, cultural performances and activities promoted knowledge in some learning cells. Specifically, culture was used as a prop to deliver the hidden knowledge to the local community; culture functioned as a bridge that extended the learners' knowledge to the broader knowledge carriers and connected the learners and the public together; culture was used as a lubricant in creating a spontaneous learning atmosphere and provided a dynamic interaction platform for knowledge construction; culture as a tool magnified the effect of the knowledge being shared, accepted and proliferated within or outside of the community; and culture was used as a toolkit to create new knowledge. Discourse as a tool impacted knowledge construction, too, in some learning cells in the Zhabei Learning Community through a variety of strategies, such as controlling text and talk, controlling the multiple resources, controlling context, and controlling the structure of discourse .

Conclusion 3: Multi-Layer Networks and Learning Structures Shape Knowledge Construction in

the Learning Community

In this section, I will discuss the networks and the learning structures in the Zhabei Learning Community and how they shape knowledge construction. I will analyze networks from two aspects: sociocentric/group networks and egocentric/individual networks (Smith & Christakis, 2008). There are two major sections in this conclusion: multi-layer networks and multiple learning structures that shape knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning Community.

The Multi-Layer Networks

To create a lifelong learning environment, the Zhabei Learning Community developed multi-layer sociocentric networks, or group/global networks, "in which all or nearly all members of a community or group and their linkages to each other are represented" (Smith & Christakis, 2008, p.408). Within the sociocentric networks, the different organizations and institutions developed diverse sub-sociocentric networks especially for different groups of people such as unemployed people and migrant people. These networks linked to each other through the between-group ties (or go-betweens) — the actors that connect two subgroups together (Burt, 2004). For example, the between-group ties such as the residential committees connect together the community schools and organizations from the industries. The individuals developed their own egocentric networks, too. However, egocentric networks, or local/individual networks, "in which an individual is located at the hub of a wheel, with the rim delineating his/her social contacts and the spokes the ties that connect them" (Smith & Christakis, 2008, p.408), were unbalanced for the different groups of people.

Hierarchical and non-hierarchical sociocentric networks. The Zhabei government promoted hierarchical and non-hierarchical collaborative networks among the educational institutions, governmental institutions, enterprises, and non-governmental institutions in sharing their learning resources and in providing learning programs. The different organizations and the institutions also created multiple formal and informal networks and connected them together like a chain to provide learning activities and services to the local people. These formal and informal hierarchical and non-hierarchical sociocentric networks within the local Zhabei community created a communication platform for information and knowledge sharing. For example, data show that to connect learning and community development, networks were created among

community schools, local community affairs centers, and local residential committees; to connect learning and learners' careers, networks were tied together among local residential committees, educational institutions such as community schools and training centers, and 29 non-educational institutions and organizations.

The comprehensive sociocentric networks stimulated knowledge sharing and collaboration. Most of the knowledge collaboration happened within the learning cells provided by the community schools, or by the professional institutions and organizations. The networks are dense within similar types of fields but are sparse across the fields. According to Lee, the administrator from the Zhabei Education Bureau, there were some administrative factors that prevented cross-field interactions. Though most of the organizations and institutions in the Zhabei Community opened their resources to each other, their interactions were mainly on the level of the annual learning community report meetings. There were no administrative mechanisms to promote cross-field/institutional collaboration. Conversations with the learners, the instructors and the administrators also showed that without support from the hierarchical leadership, there was less possibility for the non-hierarchical networks from the cross-fields to function efficiently. It is not clear how much the hierarchical networks impede or contribute to knowledge creation in the Zhabei District.

As the between-group ties, the residential committees connect the sub-sociocentric networks together. Data from the interviews show that due to their close connections with the community, many learning cells were able to situate their learning activities in the community services. For example, data from Shen, a migrant, indicated that the connections among the local community, the migrant office and the community schools enabled the New Shanghainese Club to utilize the local community resources to organize the learning activities for the migrant

workers. The migrant workers thus had the opportunity to be involved in community affairs and be socialized to become community members. There were other between-group ties to connect the community schools and the industry, the community schools and the unemployment offices, and the community schools and the employment centers.

Some studies on social networks found that the between-group ties are more likely to access a wider range of knowledge and resources. Over 30 years ago, Granovetter (1974), who interviewed 282 professional and managerial men in Newton, Massachusetts, suggested that people using interpersonal channels seemed to have better jobs. Burt (2004) assumed that people connecting across groups are more familiar with alternative ways of thinking and could bring more new ideas since opinions within groups are more homogeneous than between groups. After reviewing the evidence consistent with this assumption and investigating the networks around managers in a large American electronics company, Burt (2004) concluded that people whose networks span structural holes (social gaps between groups that prevent people across the groups from communicating with each other) have more good ideas. The between-group ties are more likely to express ideas across the different groups. "Good ideas emerged…from the intersection of social worlds, but spread… in a way that would continue segregation between the worlds" (p.394). However, the between-group ties in the Zhabei Learning Community only played administrative roles, and their tasks were limited to contact and information transference. They themselves were not involved in the knowledge creation process, which is different from most of the studies of between-group ties as the active knowledge producers (Balkundi & Harrison, 2006; Burt, 2004; Granovetter, 1974).

Sub-networks within the sociocentric networks. Within the macro-sociocentric networks, there are sub-sociocentric networks created for the different groups of people such as the unemployed, migrants, the elderly, white collar workers, and leaders.

A comprehensive collaborative network was created for the unemployed workers among the re-employment institutions, the employers, the office of the residential committee and the local community schools. Experiences from Sun and Wan indicate that these institutions collaborated to build a network to support unemployed workers in finding jobs. As a bridge, the residential committee guided the unemployed workers with low education backgrounds either to go to the community schools to gain the required working skills or to join in the tax-free pilot companies to gain knowledge about how to run a small business in practice. The employment assistance network connects the unemployed, the employed, the labor market, and training and learning together through the residential committee, which guided the unemployed workers in finding where to gain the knowledge and skills required by the job market.

Like the network for the unemployed, there is a network for migrant workers that connected the educational departments, the community schools, the labor offices, the Women's Federation, the residential committee, and the employers. The members of the residential committee were responsible for collecting the basic information about the migrant workers who moved into the residential community complexes. Then they provided this information to the other relevant institutions such as community schools and the labor offices for further actions. Networks from a variety of relevant organizations and institutions collaboratively supported the employed workers' development. For example, based on the data from Hu, some of the learning activities provided by the Sisters Club integrated training, recruitment, entertainment, travel, social affairs activities, and health and beauty together, which were supported by different

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organizations and institutions such as training centers, employers, local communities, the Women's Federation, the Birth-Control Office, etc. Still, some information could not successfully reach the migrant workers due to their unstable living conditions and lack of networks created for them.

The elderly, who spent most of their time in their local residential communities, connected to the outside world mainly through the local community schools and their sub-learning sites. Now, every administrative street has one community school and many learning sites located in the residential community complexes. All of these community schools and learning sites are connected to each other and are open to everyone. The elderly could conveniently participate in the programs provided by the learning sites near where they live, or by any community school in Shanghai. Usually, the residential committee introduced elderly people to programs and activities in the community schools and their sub-learning sites.

The Shanghai Elderly Association, the local elderly associations, or the professional associations are the other networks through which most of the elderly could gain the information and knowledge they need. For example, Jiang, the team leader of the Baoshan Photography Salon, joined the local photography associations and also the China Folklore Photographic Association (http://www.china-fpa.org/). From my conversation with him, I knew that through these professional associations, Jiang connected to a broader professional network. However, he said he had quit most of the local associations and currently focused on the China Folklore Photographic Association. He said he had little energy to attend so many activities organized by these associations. Also, his professional level had reached the point that he could not gain much from these local associations anymore. Having more networks enabled him to gain more information. However, more networks did not necessarily help him gain the level of knowledge

that he needed. This supports Adler and Kwon's (2002) idea that different social networks have their different contributions to organizational goals. Given time constraints, however, people may consider joining some social networks that satisfy their different needs instead of joining every social network available to them.

The white collar workers exchanged their knowledge and skills mainly through the internal professional networks within their organization or through the external networks from the colleagues' companies. Lang, from the Shanghai H. B. Power Co., said that in her company, they exchanged their working experiences within their companies as different professional teams and sometimes with the teams from their colleague companies. Hao, from the same company, said that to accelerate knowledge innovation and exchange, an online achievement submission system was created to encourage the different professional teams within the company to submit the reports of their projects to this online system and to share the knowledge generated from practical work with colleagues.

Compared to the other groups of participants, the leaders had broader social networks to access a variety of information and knowledge. Zun, the administrative leader from the Shanghai X. Y. Trans. Co., said that leaders like him gained information mainly through two hierarchical networks connected to his professional work: the union system and the Party Affairs system. In addition, he also had connections with the horizontal non-professional networks such as the Police Office to get a variety of information for planning his company's developmental strategy and routine work.

Social network analysis is one diagnostic method to understand knowledge management in organizations. From the organizational aspect, social network analysis supports organizations in identifying the barriers that prevent knowledge flow in the organization. It also provides the

evidence for the organization or individuals to adapt to specific roles in order to assist

knowledge transmission (Patti, 2003).There are two ways to examine how social networks have

an impact on organizations (Lin, 1982, 1990): one is to examine the structure of social

networks to see how people access the social resources within the networks, and another is to

analyze the mechanism of social networks to see how people mobilize the social resources in

networks for their own purposes. Descriptions above illustrate a picture of how different groups

of people access the social resources within the particular sub-sociocentric networks created

for them. From the organizational point of view, we can see clearly how the government created

these sub-sociocentric networks to guarantee that different groups of people have access to the

social resources they need. However, from the individual point of view, it is not clear how

people within these sub-sociocentric networks actively mobilize the social resources in social

networks for their own purposes. For example, how were the unemployed able to actively

mobilize the social resources in their sub-sociocentric networks in order to find work?

    Egocentric/individual networks. Egocentric networks, or individual networks, are

another channel through which people share information and knowledge.

    Egocentric networks are uneven in the different groups of people. The elderly and the

leaders had more egocentric networks and more opportunities to access more learning resources.

The unemployed workers and the white collar workers had fewer egocentric networks, and the

migrant workers had some random individual connections resulting in fewer opportunities to

access the learning resources they needed. Generally speaking, the better the social position, the

more networks the participants could reach, and correspondently the more knowledge they could

gain, or vice versa, which is consistent with the studies of social integration/isolation in social

networks (Balkundi & Harrison, 2006; House, Umberson & Landis,1988; Lin, 1982, 1990; Smith and Christakis, 2008).

Data from the leaders I interviewed showed that in addition to the sociocentric networks, the leaders had a variety of egocentric networks through which they could share the information and knowledge they needed. Because of their power and their positions, they could easily make friends from different fields. Through these personal friends, they were able to reach more networks and thus have broader access to knowledge carriers. In addition, they themselves were good at grasping the social resources from a variety of channels such as TV, newspapers, social activities, etc. and generating from these social resources the knowledge they needed. This is consistent with Lin's (1982, 1990) suggestion that in the hierarchical structure, the individuals nearer to the top positions have the advantages of controlling and grasping the valued resources such as wealth, status, and power.

Several elderly people I interviewed also had comparatively broader egocentric networks. Four elderly participants and several elderly people I talked to in the Zhabei Community told me that after they retired, they became more tied to their communities and the community schools instead of their career fields. The power from their previous social titles was weakened, which gave them more space to explore their networks built on friendship, health and personal interests. In contrast, interview data from the white collar workers and conversations with the people in the community indicate that many white collar workers had sparse egocentric networks. The main reason is that they were too busy with their career development and barely had time to explore the egocentric networks outside of the professional networks created by their organizations. Though the community schools were open to all of the citizens, the white collar workers barely accessed the learning resources

provided by the local community, and few had frequent connections with the learners in the community schools. They did not like to access the learning resources in the community school networks since the knowledge provided by the community schools was less sophisticated and barely attracted their attention.

The literature suggests that accessing more informal non-professional egocentric networks does not lead to gaining more knowledge. Lin (1999) , for example, reviewed the literature on how people access social resources through social networks for status attainment (a process of pursuing socioeconomic standings such as social or occupational positions). His findings indicate that "use of informal channels by itself offers no advantage over other channels, especially formal channels, in attained status" (p.481), which reflects one of the reasons why white collar workers were unwilling to connect to the informal resources provided by the community schools.

In social networks, individuals' degree of social integration/isolation reflects the number of relationships they have with others or the frequency of interaction with others (House, Umberson & Landis, 1988). Smith and Christakis' (2008) study confirmed this idea. Smith and Christakis observed that "socially isolated individuals are less able than others to buffer the impact of health stressors" (p.408) and are more likely to have negative health outcomes such as illness or death. That is, the socially isolated individuals have less interactions with others and less opportunities to gain useful information and resources. Balkundi and Harrison's (2006) research on the effect of the network structures on team effectiveness agrees with this observation and indicated that teams with dense ties tend to better achieve their goals than teams with sparse ties. The idea of social integration/isolation directly reflects the situation of the socially isolated unemployed workers and migrant workers in the Zhabei Learning

Community who had less personal interactions with others and less opportunities for improving their living conditions.

The unemployed workers struggled with their daily lives and had few, if any, egocentric networks. For example, after being laid off, Sun was isolated from several of his good friends who already had stable families and careers. Without the networks of friends and colleagues, he struggled for several years to find the right position for him in the job market. He dreamed of moving to a higher position, but his limited knowledge about the changed society and his weak educational background prevented him from connecting to higher-level networks for a better position. Hu also was laid off in the past. She participated in the programs provided to the elderly in the community school for relaxation. She built social connections with the elderly people, who indirectly provided her with knowledge about how to deal with people and get support in searching for a job. The unemployed workers need guidance about how to develop their egocentric networks intentionally as Hu did.

The migrant workers had very limited egocentric networks to provide them the information they needed. Shen, a migrant who participated in the New Shanghainese Club in the past, depended on several friends who were doing similar work to get some random business and market information. He dreamed of transferring to another career field to improve his living conditions instead of doing cleaning work. However, as an outsider, it was hard for him to be accepted into the migrant networks of the other fields, which were dominated by the migrants from other provinces. Though weak ties with the other migrant workers could have provided Shen knowledge needed to move into a new field, it was hard for him to reach out to other migrants workers, whose ties were built on the regional divisions. With limited individual connections, the migrant workers' life was boring. Shen and Chan, two migrant workers, said

they had already given up their dreams of having a better job since that was unrealistic. Unlike the unemployed workers who still had family support, the migrant workers like Shen and Chan felt they were isolated from the community, physically and emotionally, and they felt they did not belong to that community.

In summary, supported by the government, the hierarchical and non-hierarchical networks were integrated into the macro-sociocentric networks to collaboratively support a lifelong learning environment in the Zhabei District. Within this sociocentric network, there were sub-sociocentric networks for the targeted groups of people. These networks, which connected the educational institutions, the community, industry and the employment market together, were expected to guarantee that local people could access the learning resources they needed. The individuals had their own egocentric networks, too. However, the egocentric networks were uneven among the different groups of people. Generally, a better social position means more networks and correspondingly more knowledge individuals could access.

Linear and Non-Linear Learning Structures

Foucault (1976/1978) regards power as being everywhere. Power includes not only hierarchical, top-down power, but also the forms of knowledge and the forms of social control. Power exerts its control on people through the forms of law, discourse and normalization. In defining the art of the government that can be applied to the state, Foucault (1978/2000) introduced the La Mothe Le Vayer typology of the forms of the art of government. This typology includes three fundamental types of government: "the art of self-government, connected with morality; the art of properly governing a family, which belongs to economy, and, finally, the science of ruling the state, which concerns politics" (p. 206). After comparing the literature on government from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century, Foucault (1978/2000) pointed

out the important role of the people in government and the economy and the economic principle in the management of the state. He believed people can govern themselves and analyzed a society that is defined by the mass of population instead of its territoriality, a society that allows its people to play an active role in their own self-government.

Traditionally, China is a centralized country that appreciates the idea of hierarchy. The learning community, in its development, is gradually breaking the traditional hierarchical teacher-centered educational structure and has given more power and autonomy to learners and instructors to self-govern and self-organize their learning. In the Zhabei Learning Community, the government nurtured the non-governmental organizations and empowered them to develop the learning cells from the grassroots. These organizations are giving more power to their learning cells and learners to self- organize their learning activities. Instead of being confined in a classroom setting, learning in many learning cells is immersed in local community practices and rooted in multiple social units such as parks and museums. Learners in these learning cells were able to access the multiple learning resources from multiple directions. They had more space to explore the learning resources and to develop a more dynamic learning environment.

The interview data from the elderly people and several instructors and administrators show that learners and instructors in these cells creatively developed some learning structures in their self-governed practice, which were welcomed by the learners and greatly proliferated the knowledge in the local community. These learning structures included the rhizomatic learning structure, etc.

The rhizomatic learning structure, exemplified by the Ground Calligraphy Salon, is a totally open learning structure where knowledge carriers from all of the directions were tied together and interacted with each other through a hub (such as ground calligraphy). Deleuze and

Guattari (1987) regard the rhizome as "open and connectable in all of its dimensions", and it "always has multiple entryways" (p. 12), which is different from a linear structure that has one direction. The rhizomatic learning structure is open to the public and allows anyone from the public to join in and to share knowledge. It absorbs and radiates knowledge from/to all directions.

The combination of formal classroom learning and informal group learning is one of the most popular learning structures in nine community schools in the Zhabei District. According to the descriptions from Teng, the administrator from the West Zhijiang Chorus Program, they organized their learning activities in the classroom setting and performed in the local community as an informal group, with its members selected from the formal classroom-based program. This structure allows some learners to stay in the same program as Chorus group members as long as they wish. The experience of Yang, a member of the Chorus group and the chorus program, confirmed that the benefit of this structure is that the learners could always interact with the newcomers and they could gain new knowledge from each other. There is no end to learning new knowledge. The boundary of this mixed learning structure is flexible. This structure breaks the fixed boundary of the traditional learning program and promotes knowledge exchange between long-term members and newcomers in a group.

The informal interest-based learning group nurtured from the formal classroom programs is the structure greatly supported by the government. The formal classroom programs offered an opportunity for learners to know each other and to know their interests. After they finished their classroom leaning, some learners formed informal learning groups based on their interests. The government encouraged the administrative streets in the Zhabei District to develop informal learning groups in the local community. Some streets, such as Daning and Linfen, were famous

for their informal learning groups. Most of these learning groups still focus on cultural and art performances. Daning Street (the administrative divisions, similar to wards) in its *2008 Community School Evaluation Report* proposed to develop hundreds of these informal learning groups as a main strategy to spread learning to every corner of Daning street. Compared to members in the classroom setting, learners in those informal learning groups had much more freedom and flexibility to explore new knowledge and share their knowledge with each other. Learners in this structure explore each others' tacit knowledge in an informal learning setting.

In the honeycombed learning structure, several learning cells are tied together collaboratively by projects. One example is from the Shanghai H. B. Power Co. According to Hao, each professional team in the company was encouraged to apply for projects as a way to generate knowledge from their practical work collectively. The achievements of the projects were submitted to the online QC (Quality Control) system for the other colleague professionals to learn from. This structure enabled everyone in each professional team to explore his/her strengths and allowed one professional team to learn from another the knowledge generated by their group members. The online QC (Quality Control) system provided a channel for sharing group knowledge from the different teams. In this structure, the professional teams were from different departments. One team was tied to another like a chain. Knowledge from different learning teams were connected collectively within a professional knowledge chain and contributed to the whole knowledge base of these teams. This structure allows learners to share knowledge across groups.

In summary, to stimulate the vitality of the learning cells and the networks from the grassroots, the government was gradually empowering the non-governmental organizations and giving them more freedom to develop the learning cells in the local community. The self-

governed learning cells explored the available local resources and creatively developed some new learning structures. These structures broke the traditional classroom-based educational territory and rooted their learning activities in the local socio-cultural heritages. Though the traditional linear classroom learning structure was still dominant, these non-linear learning structures provide alternative ways of connecting learners to broad social resources and knowledge carriers.

Conclusion 4: Social-Cultural Factors Shape Knowledge Construction in the Learning

Community

The Zhabei Learning Community, like other learning communities in China, is one part of the enterprise to promote a harmonious society in China and to address recent social problems. These social problems include the great gap between the rich and the poor, the tensions between the upper class and the lower class, the worsening conditions of the disadvantaged, rising unemployment, and so on. The Zhabei Learning Community is influenced by macro-socio-cultural factors including the hierarchical social system, conservative social values, and economic reform. These factors both contribute to and hinder knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning Community.

Hierarchical Social System

According to Dai (2008), China is a hierarchical society. The male patriarchal system has been established for thousands of years. Confucian ethics further promoted a patriarchal political relationship. This hierarchical social and political system built an ideological legitimacy for the social values and norms such as respecting authority and saving face.

The hierarchical social system has a significant impact on the learning community development in China. The Zhabei Learning Community itself, like other learning communities

in China, is promoted by a hierarchical administrative system from the central government to the local governments. Its learning activities are radiated hierarchically from the district to streets, and further to the residential communities. This is consistent with the literature on the learning community in China, which reveals that to build a learning community, it is important to develop the learning system from the hierarchical top-level (Shao & Wang, 2005). The literature also shows how the hierarchical system plays an essential role in promoting the learning communities in China: the national policy on learning community and the speeches from the leaders on the learning community immediately resulted in a boom of activities of promoting learning communities from the regional to the local level (see Jiang, 2002; *Notice of the first, second, third and fourth lists of the national community Education pilots,"* 2001, 2003, 2006, 2007; Shao & Wang, 2005).

However, the hierarchical social system also hinders knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning Community. Political bureaucracy is one consequence of the hierarchical social system that has a negative influence on knowledge construction. The Zhabei Learning Community was supported by the three hierarchical governments: the central government, the regional government and the local government. At the local level, the leaders from the district, street and the various learning organizations were responsible for promoting the Zhabei Learning Community (Yao, 2003). Developing the learning programs in the learning community is one indicator for evaluating these local officials' political achievement. The conversation with Shen shows that one disadvantage of the top-down hierarchical management in the learning community is that which program would be supported depended on the leaders' inclinations. A learning program might not be supported when the leader supporting this program was gone. Learners could not pursue knowledge deeply and persistently. Another negative influence of the

hierarchical bureaucracy is that some learning programs became a showcase for the officials: the learning activities were organized only when the officials visited the programs, which ruined the learners' trust in the instructors and the leaders and their interest in these programs.

Respecting authority is another consequence of the hierarchical social system that has a negative influence on knowledge construction. Respecting authority— the norm developed from the Confucian value of a hierarchical social system, influenced the learning dynamics and communication and interaction styles in the knowledge construction practice in the Zhabei Learning Community.

The idea of authority influenced the participants' willingness to share knowledge with each other. Qiong and Yang said that sometimes their classmates did not want to ask each other questions because they did not want to admit that their classmates had the authority to "teach" them. Yang said when she knew one of her classmate sang well, instead of asking that classmate how she was able to sing well, she asked her instructor because she thought the instructor was the expert. In her mind, the authority had the privilege to legitimize the knowledge. The ideology of authority and hierarchy was embedded in Qiong's and Yang's minds and existed in many other learners in the Zhabei Learning Community.

Interviews and conversations with the learners show that authorities such as experts, leaders, teachers, mentors and the stakeholders in power were respected very much in terms of transferring knowledge. These authorities were expected to have "valid and reliable" knowledge. For example, Yan from the Shanghai H. B. Power Company said that authorities such as the mentors had many years of professional experiences and therefore were supposed to have a higher level of credibility to deal with problems compared to the non-mentors. Data from Zun, a leader of a private enterprise, suggest that knowledge from authorities such as professors was

valued most by them because professors as authorities had a deeper level of knowledge than non-authorities.

The negative consequence of highly respecting authority is that learners' knowledge was ignored. From my observations of some learning activities in some learning sites, I noticed that the instructors/authorities mainly transmitted knowledge to the learners, and learners barely had opportunities to explore their tacit knowledge. For example, in my first observation of the Bao Shan Photography Salon, most of the time it was the team leader who interpreted the photographs the team members took; in my second observation, the invited professional introduced his photos and the photography skills he used. Occasionally, the team members asked him some questions. My observations and the interview data from Jian, the team leader of this salon, indicate that the leader dominance (Arvaja & Hakkinen, 2002) is the main interaction pattern in this salon. There is a lack of a mechanism to stimulate knowledge from the team members and to support a critical way of constructing controversial knowledge (Arvaja & Hakkinen, 2002; Schwarz, Dreyfus & Hershkowits, 2004).

In summary, the hierarchical social system pushed the learning cells and learning activities from the district to the streets and further to the residential communities and facilitated knowledge and resources sharing in the local institutions and organizations. However, the hierarchical social system at the same time hindered knowledge construction in some learning cells. Bureaucracy and favoring authority are two main consequences of the hierarchical social system that negatively impacted knowledge construction. The idea of favoring authority restrained the knowledge from the non-authorities and hindered developing a mechanism to construct cutting-edge knowledge.

Conservative Social Values

Values and norms control people's behaviors. The traditional values control Chinese people's behavior through norms such as promotion of moderation, saving face, and age as a barrier to learning. These norms developed mainly from Confucian values and have been reinforced in practice. They controlled people's behavior and influenced knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning Community.

According to Confucius, moderation means avoiding the extremes and following the mainstream. Moderation and following the majority are the norms that influence knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning Community. Moderation is one principle guiding Jian, Lian, Xun, and Chau in judging what kind of knowledge should be valued most in their learning cells. For example, in the Baoshan Photograph Salon, Jian and the other photography evaluation committee members judged the members' products based on the majority's opinions, though it might be possible that some learners' photos were brilliant but were not appreciated by the committee members. Jian said that there were so many products there. In evaluation, they had to reach an agreement. They rejected the controversial products and accepted those that the majority appreciated most. The same principle applied in Shanghai H. B. Power Company as a way of generating the new ideas from the practical work. Data from Lian, one of the leaders in the Shanghai H. B. Power Company, show that in doing an experimental project, the project team members thought the safest way to guarantee that there is no risk fto their project investment was to follow the majority's opinions. The influence of moderation on knowledge construction is that controversial or cutting-edge knowledge might be ignored.

The Influence of moderation on knowledge construction reflects one important assumption of Berger and Luckmann's (1967) theory of social constructionism: achieving an

agreement/consensus based on the majority's perspectives. Knowledge construction is an ongoing process of institutionalizing the subjective tacit perspectives into the objective explicit knowledge. Berger and Luckmann's (1967) noticed that:

> Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors… The typifications of habitualized actions that constitute institutions are always shared ones. They are available to all the members of the particular social group in question, and the institution itself typifies individual actors as well as individual actions (p.54)

Berger and Luckmann's (1967) assumption of social constructionism is echoed by most of the social constructionism scholars who favor fundamental or useful knowledge and ignore controversy, difference and heterogeneous knowledge. For example, Heylighen (1993) believed that for social constructionists, achieving consensus is the criterion by which to judge the knowledge constructed. Prawat and Floden (1994) claimed that in the knowledge construction process, disagreements needed to be clarified in order to achieve compromise and consensus. However, some scholars doubt the "useful" interpretations and believe there are fundamental "true" or "valid" interpretations that fit in certain contexts (Crotty, 1998; Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). These scholars' perspectives generally suggest that consensus should be achieved in the construction process. This consensus should fit in the local context and explain the phenomenon at the present time. Other than that, it seems few discuss the value of controversial ideas in construction practices. These controversial ideas might not be appreciated at the time but may be valuable for opening space for innovation and creation in the future. This study and the current research on social construction both observe a tendency to favor fundamental or useful

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knowledge while controversy, difference and heterogeneous knowledge are ignored in the knowledge construction process.

The local people's belief about age and learning is one of the essential factors constraining the learners from learning and sharing knowledge in the Zhabei Learning Community. Many participants mentioned how they could not learn anymore because they were too old. This included the participants with ages ranging from the 30s to the 50s. For example, Shen, a migrant worker in his 30s, felt he was too old to learn the new skills to make his life better; Xun and Wan, once unemployed workers, and in their 40s now, had already lost their enthusiasm for learning for a better job; and Yang, in her late 50s and now retired, thought it was unrealistic to learn to be an excellent professional singer at her age. Though the idea of lifelong learning has been disseminated for many years in the local community, the age issue is still a concern for the learners. My assumption is that the current social system might be one factor that prevents learners at higher ages from learning. My assumption is based on some practical evidence in the fields of education and employment. For instance, in the *2009 Announcement on Shanghai Governmental Staff-Recruitment Examination*, one of the requirements was that the applicants should be older than 18 but younger than 35 years old. In 2009, the Putuo District Education Bureau in Shanghai planned to recruit 401 teachers. To qualify, applicants had to be younger than 45 years old ("*2009 teacher recruitment announcement by the Shanghai Putuo Education Bureau*," 2009). In 2008, it was required that those applying for graduate degree programs should not be over 40 years old ("*Regulation of 2008 Graduate Programs Application*," 2007). These examples expose the phenomenon of age restrictions in terms of applying for government positions, teaching positions and graduate programs. Observing the online job postings and talking to the local people, I found that age restriction is a common phenomenon. People with

age in the 20s through 30s have many more opportunities in the job market. Regarding age restrictions in terms of education and career, it is easy to understand why some participants I interviewed lost their enthusiasm for learning to advance their careers. The local people's beliefs about age and learning were indirectly reflected in practice in the Zhabei Learning Community and were supported by the current educational and career systems, which I assume is one of the barriers for including more learners in knowledge construction practice. However, it is not clear if this belief about age and learning is mainly influenced by the traditional Chinese culture, is impacted by the social change in the background of the economic reform, or by both.

Saving face is another norm that restrains learners from sharing knowledge. Four participants, including Qiong and Yang, retired people, Xun, once an unemployed worker, and Chau, a leader, told me how they were afraid of losing their face in learning. For example, Qiong said that being afraid of losing face, the learners in his learning cells did not like to ask questions and also made fun of those who asked questions. Yang told me that she and her classmates did not like to share much knowledge with each other, mainly because of the face problem. She was a singer in the past. She said she was afraid that if she opened herself too much to her classmates, they would know her weaknesses and would laugh at her— because they would expect her, as a professional singer, to sing much better than other non-professionals. Chau's description indicates that as a leader, he did not like to express his ideas actively in the group learning activities. As a leader with power, he worried that if he failed in group learning activities, he would feel embarrassed. The norm of saving face, as Xuan (2008) claimed, is influenced by the Confucian ideological idea of nobility and humbleness, which assumes that people in higher positions/authority be honored and respected. This ideological idea of nobility and humbleness reflects the Confucian value of hierarchy. According to the literature, a learning community is

supposed to be a safe learning environment for learners to express their ideas freely, respect the different voices, and value the mutual engagements in the learning activities (Bersch & Lund, 2002; Janov, 1995; Lawrence, 1997; Lawrence, 2002; Lieberman, 2000; Martiny, 1998; Moore & Brooks, 2000; Pereles, Lockyer & Fidler, 2002). However, influenced by the Confucian value of hierarchy, the norm of saving face restrained learners from sharing knowledge in some learning cells. The learners did not feel safe to expose themselves in public for fear of being laughed at.

In summary, Confucian values such as hierarchy and moderation controlled Chinese people for thousands of years and supported a harmonious and ordered society. These values are embedded in Chinese people's practices and developed into norms that restrained knowledge construction. For example, the norm of being moderate discouraged the adoption of the controversial, perhaps cutting-edge knowledge; saving face restrained peer knowledge sharing and the exchange of tacit knowledge; and the belief about age and learning and the social system that supported this belief decreased learners' motivation to learn and to share knowledge in the Zhabei Learning Community.

Economic Reform

The economic reform in China from 1978 gradually replaced the traditional planned economy model with a market economy model. Zhang (1994, as cited in Zhang & Zhang, 2001) summarized the changes in China during the transition to the market economy, including the changes in ideology, economic system, social structure, social mode, and change resulting from the influence of globalization. In the transitional period, the government was gradually changing its control strategies, which, as Zhang (2009) pointed out, included: (a) changing from a hierarchical control model to a networking control model, allowing the economic organizations

to have more freedom to make their own decisions, and incorporating the efforts from the between-group organizations (the organizations that connect the other organizations together) and the new social organizations;(b) using multiple strategies to control people from different social strata since the social structure became more complicated; (c) combining social control with self-control; and (d) encouraging the public to participate in political and social affairs and to contribute to their efforts.

Economic reform changed the nature of the state's administration of the economy. The government decentralized its control over on the commercial enterprises (Whyte, 2009). Meanwhile, recognizing that economic reforms required major structural changes in the political and administrative system, the government transformed personnel recruitment, promotion, and incentive practices at all levels. Younger and better educated people were gradually replacing poorly educated officials (Whyte, 2009). These changes and transformations challenged the traditional beliefs about education. Before the market reform, higher education was not a necessity for a better job. After the economic reform, the enterprises gradually transformed from heavy industry-oriented enterprises to high technical and knowledge-oriented enterprises. The core competition among the enterprises centered on their employees' knowledge and skills. The new economic system valued education and educated people. According to Chau and Lian, leaders from the Shanghai X. B. Electrical Co., after the economic reform, the competition from the market required the state-owned electrical enterprises to improve their poor service. To respond to market competition, the state-owned electrical enterprises strengthened their employees' training and education. Within the system, the electrical companies established a shared learning system. Shanghai X. B. Electrical Co. formed its inner professional learning system to guarantee that its employees have a platform to draw

upon each others' strengths. The competition from the market required private enterprise to make a great effort to improve their competition capability, too. Zun, a leader of the private Shanghai X. Y. Trans. Co, said that the company nurtured a good learning atmosphere for its employees, provided training and learning activities, signed learning contracts with its employees to stimulate their learning motivation, and was gradually developing into a learning company.

Economic reform opened a door to the outside world. The idea of lifelong learning and China's joining the WTO (World Trade Organization) strengthened people's belief in education. In the Zhabei Learning Community, all of the organizations and institutions are supposed to be one part of the lifelong learning enterprise and are encouraged to open and share their learning resources with each other. At the same time, economic reform caused competition between private and semi-private firms and public ownership firms (Nee & Matthews,1996). Competition stimulated by the economic reform was valued in society. The fierce competition blocked to a certain degree knowledge sharing among the peer individuals and learning cells in the Zhabei Community. Yang, from the West Zhijiang Chorus Program, said that every year, the Chorus groups in the districts competed with each other for the prestigious awards. The Chorus groups were reluctant to share their knowledge with each other due to the competition for rewards. Though competition promoted a learning atmosphere, it also set up communication barriers among the competitive learning groups and blocked knowledge sharing among the peer learning groups.

Economic reform valued market rewards and market rules. It weakened the Communist Party's monitoring and sanctioning of people and reduced the level of direct control from the government (Nee & Lian, 1994; Walder, 1994, as cited in Nee & Matthews, 1996). This situation gave the local institutions and organizations more space for innovations without going through

the complicated bureaucratic examination (Nee & Matthews,1996). With the market transition, institutional changes occurred at national, regional, and local levels. For example, at the national level, critical changes included decollectivization, fiscal decentralization, enterprise reform, legal and regulatory reform, etc. At the local level, institutions stress the structure of social networks instead of depending on vertical connections with government officials (Nee & Matthews, 1996).

One of the goals of the Zhabei Learning Community is to respond to the central government's strategic aim of maintaining a stable and harmonious society. The Zhabei government was gradually decentralizing its hierarchical control of the local community and exerted network control by supporting the collaborations among the institutions and organizations in the local community and creating the supportive system for different groups of people, such as unemployed workers, migrant workers, the elderly, white-collar workers, and the leaders. The Zhabei government also empowered the local grassroots organizations to self-govern and self-organize their learning cells and to push the learning cells to every corner of the local community. The decentralization and network control system stimulated the vitality and creativity of the local organizations, pushed the learning cells down to the grassroots, and enabled the learners to explore knowledge embedded in the local social resources and cultural and historical heritage.

Fan (2008) points out that the economic reforms broke the traditional closed development tradition. The Chinese society opened its market to the outside, and encouraged the public to be involved in political life and strengthen their sense of participation in societal development. Activities such as soliciting suggestions from the public, a telephone call-in show to the mayor, and mayor reception day created the communication platforms for the public and

encouraged the pubic to participate in social development. These strategies created a space for the ordinary people to express their ideas.

Valuing the ordinary people's ideas challenged the authority-oriented tradition in the Zhabei Learning Community. Though the authorities were still dominate in some learning cells in the Zhabei Community, the concept of the "authorities" was reinterpreted and redefined in some learning cells. For example, data from Lang, the team leader of the electricity transformation professional group in Shanghai H. B. Power Co., show that one-way leader dominance was gradually being transformed to shared authority among the many stakeholders. In Lang's team, to solve a complicated problem at work, knowledge from peer professional teams was pulled together, and many stakeholders were involved in making a decision. Hao, from the same organization, confirmed that the team leaders at the Shanghai H. B. Power Co. were mainly the facilitators in learning instead of the knowledge authorities who had absolute power in the decision-making process.

Economic reform decentralized the government's hierarchical control but at the same time caused the great gap between the rich and the poor (Hu, 2005; Sun, 2005; Wang, 2005). The economic gap has fostered social conflict (Hu, 2005; Wang, 2005). During the period of the societal transition, the social stratification produced two groups: the socially advantaged group and the socially disadvantaged group. The socially advantaged group consists of the political, economic and the intellectual elites. The socially disadvantaged group includes the poor, migrant workers, and unemployed workers who have very limited social and economic resources (Yi, 2009).

Data from the migrant workers and the unemployed workers indicate that the economic reforms directly influenced their life and their learning. These workers responded to the social

and economic changes differently. For example, Sun and Wan were laid off during the market reforms. Without being guided as to what kind of knowledge and skills he needed to learn, Sun got lost during his process of resocialization. He changed jobs many times, obtained a college degree, and finally he got his current job with the help of the local community affairs center. However, he did not think his current job was the right career for him. He wanted to learn some skills for a better career. He was struggling to find the right direction for himself. Wan, once an unemployed worker, transferred from a state-owned enterprise to a joint-venture enterprise. The new working environment provided her with a higher salary and transformed her into a disciplined and well-trained employee. She followed her bosses' directions to do things, without arguments and gossip as most of the employees did in the state-owned enterprises. She observed the new environment, experienced the new culture, learned the new skills required, and gradually adjusted to her new context. Her resocialization process coincides with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which claims that learners adjust their behaviors expected by society by observing, imitating and modeling others' behaviors and attitudes, and noting the outcomes of those behaviors. The difference is that instead of adjusting her behavior by negotiating with the new context, Wan imitated new knowledge and skills by observing her new context and at the same time was "forced" to accept the new institutional rules and the training for career adjustment without much negotiation.

The migrant workers' situations were even worse than those of the unemployed workers during the societal transition. With the economic reform going further, Shen and the other migrant workers found it hard to find jobs that could guarantee them the basic living conditions. There were limited learning programs provided to the migrant workers in the Zhabei Learning Community. Shen thought these programs would not help them to find a better job, and he did

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not want to sacrifice his working time for learning. Shen said most of the migrant workers were bored. They had limited networks, and they did not know what would happen in the future.

In summary, the economic reform opened a free market for China but at the same time caused social problems and the great gap between the rich and the poor. Socially disadvantaged group such as migrant workers and unemployed workers lacked social support and social resources and experienced different types of resocialization as a result of the social pressure. Through learning and training, some were successfully resocialized, while some were still puzzled about their futures. The migrant workers' situations were the worst during the period of societal transition. While there were a few learning programs available for them, the migrant workers struggled with their poor living conditions and had little interest in these learning programs.

The government used multiple strategies to exert social control to maintain a stable and harmonious society, such as stimulating competition, exerting linear and non-linear controls, and decentralizing the economic and political management structures. These strategies influenced knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning community, but they served as a double-edged sword.

Market competition stimulated learning and education in society and pushed the organizations in the Zhabei Learning Community to establish their professional learning systems for their employees. However, the fierce competition, to a certain degree, blocked knowledge sharing among the peer individuals and learning cells in the Zhabei Community. The economic reform introduced non-hierarchical network control and the decentralization of hierarchical power. More grassroots organizations were empowered to organize the learning cells, which stimulated the creativity of the local non-governmental organizations and promoted the local

knowledge rooted in the local socio-cultural and historical heritage. Influenced by the trends of decentralization and empowerment of the grassroots and ordinary people, the Zhabei Learning Community employed decentralization and network control systems, which challenged the traditional idea of "authority," stimulated grassroots knowledge, and enabled the learners to explore local knowledge.

The Interaction of Knowledge Construction Patterns and Factors Shaping the Patterns

In the previous sections, I discussed four conclusions in terms of the patterns and the factors that influenced the knowledge construction in general. In this section, I will specifically discuss how the socio-cultural and learning community factors impacted the patterns of knowledge construction.

Knowledge in nature is not objective and neither is it neutral. It is created in the local context and is gradually objectivated into institutionalized knowledge. In this process, the invisible forces such as power and discourse drive the constructed practices in certain directions that benefit certain interest groups. Knowledge is produced by multiple forms of constraint. It is within a structure of rules, and controlled by power in the forms of law, regulations, culture, language and discourse (Foucault, 1976/1978). In the construction process, power monitors the direction of the socially constructed practice and controls people and their statements and further controls the society towards ordered social structures. Power monitors and filters the practices with multiple mechanisms such as law, normalization and discourse. It guarantees that practices that fit in the discursive context and are congruent with the institutional interests are legitimately objectivated into institutionalized knowledge (Foucault, 1976/1978).

As one part of the project for a harmonious Chinese society, the learning communities in China are supported by a series of policies and regulations on lifelong learning/education and

community education. These policies are a source of power that directly influences the direction of the learning community projects in China. The Zhabei Learning Community was supported by those policies and regulations on lifelong learning/education and community education, too. To create a collaborative learning community (Ernest, 1995; Kilpatrick, Barrett, and Jones, 2003) and to build a partnership among the government, business and education institutions and the links between existing formal, non-formal or informal educational providers (Henderson, Castles & Brown, 2000; Ye, 2005), the Zhabei Learning Community created comprehensive collaborative networks for sharing knowledge and resources among the organizations and institutions in the Zhabei District. These collaborative networks enabled the learners in the Zhabei District to conveniently join in any learning cells in Shanghai and in the Zhabei District at any time.

The comprehensive collaborative networks and resources sharing policy supported by the Zhabei District Government attempted to break the boundaries of the conventional school learning settings and create an environment for contextualized learning. These collaborative networks enabled the learning activities to connect to the learners' social and cultural contexts, to learners' daily lives, to their work, and to local community issues (Han and Wang , 2006; Moore & Brooks, 2000; Stein & Imel, 2002; Wenger,1998; Zhu & Baylen, 2005). These collaborative networks created an environment for *knowledge circulation, knowledge contextualization, and knowledge radiation*. For example, the resource sharing policy among the different institutions and organizations enabled the ground calligraphy groups to move their writing activities from indoors to public places such as the parks and public squares and radiate their learning activities to a bigger social circle; the white collar workers could share their practical knowledge with other colleagues outside of their companies due to the rule of collaboration with other colleague

organizations; and the migrant workers had the chance to join in the programs supported by the different institutions, travel around the different parts of Shanghai, participate in local community management work, and experience the culture, custom and social rules of Shanghai.

However, some traditional social-cultural factors such as the taken-for-granted norms and discourses constrain knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning Community. For example, the norm of authorities was still the dominate force in some programs, which left much less space for grassroots knowledge to develop and for the learners to *simulate* knowledge from other learners sufficiently. The norm of moderation ignored heterogeneous knowledge and cutting-edge knowledge. It is a negative force that works against stimulating provocative knowledge. Discourse of age discouraged some learners' motivation to learn and to share knowledge, especially when it was supported by employment and education policies that did not favor people who are over certain ages. Discourse of face prevented peer knowledge sharing. Some learners would rather pursue knowledge from the authorities rather than exploring knowledge with their colleagues or classmates for the sake of saving face. Some of these norms and discourses as part of the Chinese traditional culture were supported by law and regulations, normalized in people's daily lives and gradually became the common sense rules that govern people's actions and behaviors. They are the powerful forces that constrain knowledge construction at the different stages, such as radiation at the stage of knowledge institutionalization and simulation, circulation, and socialization at the stage of knowledge typification.

The economic reform dramatically changed the traditional social structure and broke many Chinese people's dream of working for one institution forever under the planned economy system. With the economic reform, nearly everyone needed to *resocialize* into the new society: the migrant workers rushed to the cities to earn a living, the factory workers without much

education were laid off, the leaders were pushed to follow the market economy rules, and the white collar workers were requested to continuously learn new knowledge and skills... The changed social structure urged people to adopt new roles, knowledge and values. People adjusted their behaviors by observing, imitating and modeling others' behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes of those behaviors (Bandura, 1977), especially the significant others who could show individuals the relevant roles and behaviors and the structure of the new reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1976). Meanwhile, the programs provided by the different institutions, such as the community schools, the Labor Unions, the Women's Federations, the business associations, and the migrant offices, supported the different groups of people in their resocialization to the new social context. However, some factors became barriers for the *socialization* process. For example, because of lack of connections to significant others and little support from professional institutions, Sun got lost in his resocialization process, and Shen's socialization backfired because of the political bureaucracy in some programs he attended.

Economic reform also challenged the traditional idea of "authority" and created the soil for the *contextualized knowledge* and knowledge from the grassroots. Under the economic reform, knowledge from the grassroots is valued, which greatly stimulated learners to explore local knowledge and the pragmatic knowledge in practice, instead of only absorbing knowledge from the authorities. However, the fierce competition in the market economy context also discouraged some learners' willingness to share their tacit knowledge. Under this circumstance, some learners learned to *simulate* knowledge from others. Sometimes this simulation process is misleading when there is a large knowledge gap between the simulators and simulatees.

In summary, in this section, I relate the patterns of knowledge construction to the factors that shape the patterns. I specifically discuss how the socio-cultural and learning community

factors as multiple forms of constraint, forces and mechanisms that monitor and filter the knowledge construction practices, lead the construction practices to certain directions, and create an environment for certain construction patterns to emerge.

Implications for Practice

This study explored how knowledge is constructed in the learning community in the Zhabei district in Shanghai, China. Specifically, I focused on patterns of knowledge construction and the factors that shape knowledge construction. This study has significant implications for practitioners and policy makers in the field of adult education.

Practitioners

There are several suggestions for practitioners, including: applying the patterns of knowledge construction, using tools in knowledge construction, and deconstructing norms and values.

About applying the patterns. Based on the theory of social constructionism, this study revealed several specific patterns of knowledge construction including radiation, etc. generated from practice. To promote knowledge construction in learning communities, it is suggested that practitioners consciously employ each of these patterns.

Radiation emphasizes how knowledge is shared among learners and proliferated from individuals to the public through various tools. To apply this pattern of radiation, practitioners may consider: (a) providing a public platform where learners have the opportunities to communicate and exchange ideas with the public; (b) having an interesting theme or topic that attracts the public's attention; (c) using tools such as media to connect the individuals to the public; and (d) having a loose and open learning structure that allows anyone who has interest in the theme or topic to join in.

Circulation emphasizes how people gain certain types of knowledge by interacting with the multiple dimensions of this knowledge. To apply this pattern, practitioners first analyze the structure of the knowledge to be gained and divide the structure into several main dimensions. Second, practitioners organize a series of learning activity sessions to present the multiple dimensions of that knowledge in interaction. One session addresses one dimension of the knowledge. Each session may include several sub-sessions of learning activities if it is necessary.

Simulation emphasizes how people gain knowledge that is suitably analogous through a process of observation, imitation and adaptation. People imitate the analogous knowledge from other people, from nature, from other animals, or from the cultural and historical heritages. Using the pattern of simulation to train learners how to imitate knowledge from each other, practitioners need to make sure that the knowledge gap among learners is not huge so that they can easily imitate each other's knowledge. The practitioners support learners in analyzing the whole structure of the simulated learning objects so that learners know which parts in their knowledge base are missing or weak and would benefit from imitating accomplished learners. To maximize knowledge construction through this pattern, the learning cells should create a learning environment that rewards knowledge sharing, appreciates the mutual benefits among the learners, and strategically assigns learning partners who will not be a threat to each other. For example, the learners in a learning group could be selected from different departments in one organization to avoid negative competition, or the learners and the mentors could be selected such that they have complementary knowledge and would feel comfortable "imitate" each other without feeling threatened.

Socialization emphasizes how people gain certain knowledge required by a new context by being involved in a changed socio-cultural context, being shaped by it, and finally by

adapting to it. One example of socialization is training immigrants to adapt to and to re-socialize into the context of a new country. To apply this pattern, practitioners can provide professional consultant services to learners to identify the gap between learners' previous knowledge and knowledge required by the new context, offer workshops about how to adapt to the new context, organize learning programs or social activities that support learners in becoming involved in and familiar with the new context. In addition, the message of socialization conveyed to the learners should be consistent so that the learners will be clear about the rules they should follow in their new reality.

Contextualization emphasizes how people gain new knowledge by situating that knowledge in the local authentic context as a form of local knowledge and then generating the local knowledge to implicit/public knowledge. To apply this pattern, some suggestions for practitioners include: (a) establishing a collaborative learning culture that values everyone's strengths and enables learners to know each other's strengths; (b) developing a mechanism to support grassroots knowledge as was done with the Quality Control (QC) system in the Shanghai H. B. Power Co. ; and (c) situating learning in an authentic context, as in the case of Wan and her colleagues, who were organized to learn the welfare policies embedded in their daily work practice in the form of a game.

About using tools in knowledge construction. In the Zhabei Learning Community, tools such as cultural products, discourse, and social networks were used in some learning cells to facilitate knowledge construction. However, analyzing the social networks in the Zhabei Learning Community also showed that there are some areas that need to be addressed in practice. First of all, there was not much communication in terms of knowledge exchange among different groups across fields. For example, the electric industry seldom exchanged their learning

experiences with the traffic industry. Second, the socially disadvantaged groups such as the unemployed and migrant workers had limited sociocentric networks and egocentric networks to support them in accessing the available social resources. Practitioners may want to consider strategies for supporting these weak groups in developing more networks. For instance, practitioners may provide some informal social activities for these weak groups, such as friends-meet-up parties, home-town people gatherings, information sharing tea time, etc. These informal social activities can be expected to create networking platforms for these socially disadvantaged groups. Some participants did not know where to look for available resources. Adult educators might provide some workshops about how to explore the social resources, how to connect to the interest groups, and where to get needed support.

About deconstructing the norms and values. The traditional culture and norms such as respecting authority, valuing moderation and saving face were socially constructed and had some negative influence on knowledge construction. For example, moderation restrained cutting-edge knowledge and the norm of saving face prevented learners from sharing knowledge in some learning cells. Practitioners may use the methods of deconstruction to support learners in breaking the restraints of conventional norms and values on knowledge construction (Spivak , 1974; St. Pierre, 2000). The deconstruction methods include questioning the traditional norms and values and depowering their conventional values and deconstructing the old concepts and reconstructing them with new meanings (Spivak, 1974). For example, the concept of authority traditionally refers to people who have power to dominate a situation. Practitioners can decentralize the conventional role of the authorities and assign them alternative roles, such as facilitators or consultants who support collaborative learning; practitioners can deconstruct the original meaning of authority and include new meanings for the concept, such as claiming that

everyone is an authority on some area of expertise. To break the norms of valuing moderation, saving face and being afraid one is too old to learn, practitioners can organize entertainment workshops or games to train learners to raise bold and even ridiculous questions, to make mistakes, and to criticize and challenge each others' ideas. Then the practitioners can introduce these activities into the games or workshops of regular learning activities, gradually regulating comfort with the new norms.

Policy Makers

Suggestions for policy makers include: decentralizing power, eliminating age restrictions in policies related to continued learning and employment, and supporting the weak groups' learning and career situations.

The hierarchical governmental system requested all the learning resources be open to the local citizens and created a supportive system for the different groups of people. No doubt the top-down hierarchical system promoted collaboration among the institutions and organizations and pushed the learning cells down to every social unit of the community. Influenced by the economic reforms, the Zhabei government was gradually decentralizing its hierarchical control on the local community and empowered the grassroots organizations to self-organize the learning cells. This stimulated the vitality and creativity of the learning cells organized by the grassroots organizations and encouraged the learners to explore knowledge embedded in the local social resources and cultural and historical heritage. However, this study reveal the top-down hierarchical system still had some negative influence on the Zhabei Learning Community, such as the bureaucracy. Due to the bureaucracy, learners could not pursue knowledge deeply and persistently, and learners' motivations to learn were ruined. In the Zhabei Learning Community, more actions should be taken to include efforts from the grassroots organizations, the non-

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governmental organizations and learners, and give them more power to explore tacit and local knowledge. For example, the governmental leaders may change their role from directly supervising the Learning Community to supporting it; also, in annual learning community evaluations, the criterion for judging if a learning community is successful should be to see how much non-governmental and grassroots organizations in the local residential communities are involved and how much their learning cells satisfy the learners' needs.

The age issue is one of the big concerns for some adult learners. It is not clear why some adults felt they could not learn due to their age. As previously discussed, the traditional culture may have had a partial influence on this issue. However, one certainty is that the social and educational systems do not support adults in their late 30s and older seeking learning or employment. The policy makers may improve this situation by eliminating the age restrictions in policies related to continued learning and employment.

The local government created the supportive system for different groups of people. However, socially disadvantaged group such as migrant workers and unemployed workers still had limited social resources available to them. Moreover, data show that one of the key factors that prevented them from learning is their comparatively poor living conditions. Without a solution to their basic living problems, it is unrealistic for them to settle down for learning. The policy of promoting lifelong learning in the local community needs to address the basic living problems of the socially disadvantaged. Policy makers may consider providing learning opportunities tied to employment and at the same time publishing more job-related information and opportunities through in-between organizations such as the local residential committee offices and the other informal organizations, and channels that can more easily reach this group.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study explores the patterns of knowledge construction and the factors that shape knowledge construction from the social constructionism perspective. It is generally consistent with most scholars' views about social constructionism and adds some new ideas to the knowledge bases of social constructionism and the learning community. Here I specifically point out some areas that might be meaningful for further research.

With regard to the research focus, this study explored how knowledge is constructed in a learning community. This study shows that consensus is one important principle that is applied in knowledge construction practice, which is congruent with Berger and Luckmann's (1967) theory of social constructionism and most scholars' views on social constructionism. That is, constructing knowledge is a process of respecting the different perspectives and favoring the perspective with which the majority agrees. From the data, I found that heterogeneous knowledge, knowledge that is dissimilar or is diverse from the majority's value system, was ignored by the practitioners. This raises a question of what knowledge should be valued in knowledge construction. Knowledge is produced by multiple forms of constraint and controlled by power in the forms of law, regulations, norms, language, and discourse (Foucault, 1976/1978). These constraints determine that knowledge accepted by the majority is basically the knowledge within the range of the mainstream norms, values and the interest of the powerful agents. In the knowledge construction process, homogeneous knowledge, knowledge that fits in the majority's value system, is accepted. This seems to be a taken-for-granted perspective recognized by scholars of social constructionism and has been practiced by educators in the Zhabei Learning Community. However, I wonder about the possible value of heterogeneous

knowledge in our lives. Further, how can we develop a mechanism to include heterogeneous

knowledge in the construction process? These should be interesting topics for the future research.

How to balance the conflict between competition and collaboration in the construction

practice is another important issue raised in this study. Collaboration is highly stressed by the

scholars of social constructionism and the learning community (for example, Berger &

Luckmann, 1967; Ernest, 1995; Kilpatrick, Barrett, & Jones, 2003; Lawrence, 1997; Marsick,

Bitterman & van der Veen, 2000). The Zhabei Learning Community attempted to promote

collaboration among the institutions and organizations. However, due to the competition,

learners in some learning cells were not willing to share knowledge with each other, and some

learning cells barely communicated with other learning cells. The market reforms in China value

competition. Competition stimulated people's motivation to learn but at the same time blocked

knowledge sharing among learners. We recognize how important collaboration is for knowledge

construction. However, how do we motivate collaboration in a context that values competition?

How do we maintain competition and at the same time promote collaboration in the knowledge

construction practice? More research is needed to answer these questions.

As to the research method, I especially would like to bring up the question of how to deal

with the cultural norms that embedded in and that influenced the interviews. In other words, how

can we derive an authentic account from our participants and represent the hidden meanings

behind the words? This question occurred in my interview process. It is not simply a technical

question about how to collect valid data. It is also a question of how to deal with the cultural

issues in interviews. In interviews, I tried to figure out the weaknesses of the Zhabei Learning

Community. Most of the participants avoided talking about these issues directly. In our culture,

we usually do not criticize something directly. The participants used the indirect language of

their daily life, just like the vague language style politicians use to avoid unnecessary troubles. Therefore, in the data analysis process, it is a challenge to reveal the hidden meanings behind the participants' accounts. The constant comparison method supports us in exploring the meaning in words, but is hard to present the meaning behind the words. For example, when I asked some learners about their learning experiences, most of time they told me that everything was good and that the leaders cared about them. However, "Everything is good" does not mean they really believe everything is perfect and nothing needs to be improved. This is just their custom of using general positive language when talking to an outsider, especially when the information they provide relates to the organizations for which they work. The authentic meaning does not occur in words but is derived from the cultural norms. If researchers do not know the cultural norms, they may misinterpret the meanings of the data. I feel it also might be an interesting topic for future research to study how to represent the authentic meanings hidden in the cultural norms.

Finally, in terms of the reliability of the five patterns of knowledge construction, I am not sure if they are characteristic of other learning communities in China or in other countries. I think it will be meaningful in the future to do a case study about how well these patterns are applicable in the other learning communities in Shanghai or in other geographical learning contexts. It may also be interesting to study other types of learning communities, such as an online learning community, or a community of practice, and see if these patterns exist. If they do exist in other types of learning communities, what are the differences compared to the patterns generated from the geographical learning community? These patterns might be refined through research in other contexts.

Chapter Summary

This study generated four conclusions about the knowledge construction in the Zhabei Learning Community. First, knowledge construction is a socially embedded collective learning process. Second, cultural products and discourses are tools that promote knowledge construction. Third, multi-layer networks and learning structures shape knowledge construction in the learning community. Fourth, the hierarchical social system, conservative social values, and economic reforms shape knowledge construction in the learning community. Following these four conclusions, the interaction of knowledge construction patterns and factors shaping the patterns was discussed. This chapter also addressed implications for practice and offered suggestions for future research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A Interview Guides

Interview Guide for Learners in the Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community

1. Why do you participant in the learning community activities?

2. Tell me about your learning experiences in this learning community.

3. Describe one of the important events in your life that prompted you to learn in this learning community.

4. How did you deal with this important event? What learning strategies did you use?

5. Why did you use such strategies rather than others?

6. What kind of supports did you get from the learning community to deal with this event?

7. What did you learn from dealing with this event?

8. What strategies did you use to deal with the similar issues in other similar situations?

9. What do you think are the most important learning strategies for you to deal with these similar issues? Why are they the most important strategies?

10. What do you think are the most important factors that influence you to use these learning strategies? Why are they the most important factors?

11. Who have you talked with or consulted to assist you to deal with the challenges you had recently? Describe your relationships with these people (For example, how did you know them? How did you know their expertise? How did you contact with them successfully? And what made you feel comfortable enough to open yourself to the people you asked for help?

12. In order to support you to deal with these issues successfully in your life, what should be improved in this learning community?

13. Tell me something that you really liked in this learning community.

14. What else would you like to add before we end this interview?

Interview Guide for Administrators in the Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community

1. Background information about this learning community

   - What are the main purposes for initiating this learning community?

   - What are the main characteristics of this learning community compared with other communities? What is special?

   - What would you hope the learners get from this learning community?

2. Learning and instructional strategies used in this learning community

   - What strategies are used to organize the learning activities?

   - What strategies are used to stimulate the learning atmosphere?

   - What kind of internal and external resources are used in learning activities?

3. Why did you use the above strategies?

4. What are the barriers and difficulties for this learning community?

5. What are the successful experiences to support the learners in this learning community?

6. How do you think this learning community could provide a better learning environment for the learners?

Interview Guide for Researchers Studying Learning Communities in China

1. Background information about this learning community

   - What are the main purposes for initiating the Chinese learning communities?

- What are the relevant policies? Why did governments issue these policies?

- What are the main characteristics of the learning community compared with non-learning communities? What is special?

- What would you expect to see from initiating the learning community?

2. Strategies used in the learning community

- What strategies did the governments use to organize the learning community?

- Why did the government use these strategies to organize the learning community?

3. What are the barriers and difficulties for the Chinese learning communities?

4. What are the successful experiences in initiating the Chinese learning communities?

5. How do you think the Chinese learning community could achieve the governmental purposes better?

Interview Guide for Instructors/Facilitators in the Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community

1. Background information about the learning program/project/ activity you are organizing now

- What are the main purposes of this learning program/project/ activity?

- What are the main characteristics of this learning program/project/ activity compared with other traditional programs?

- What do you expect your learners to get from this program?

2. Learning and instructional strategies used in this learning program/project/ activity

- What strategies did you use to motivate the learners to exchange and create their new ideas?

- What strategies did you use to stimulate a learning atmosphere?

- What kind of internal and external resources did you use in your program?

3. Why did you use the above strategies?

4. Compared with your previous instruction experiences, what was special in this learning program/project/ activity? Why do you think they are special?

5. What are the barriers and difficulties for this learning program/project/ activity?

6. How do you think Zhabei Learning Community could create a more comfortable and efficient learning environment for its learners?

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled " Knowledge Construction in the Learning Community: A Case Study of Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community in China" conducted by Bo Chang from the Department of Lifelong Education, Administration and Policy (706-247-6269), at the University of Georgia. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can refuse to participate or stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to explore how knowledge is constructed among learners in a geographical learning community in Shanghai, China. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:
1. Sign the consent form to be interviewed.
2. Provide information, artifacts, and documents about my learning/working activities, project plans, and relevant materials about learning community.
3. Participate in about one hour, audiotaped interview about my learning/working/life experiences, learning/working activities, and my opinions on the Chinese learning community.
5. Participate in a short follow-up interview if necessary.

I give my permission for the researchers to take photographs and videos, and publicly disseminate the photos and videos using pseudonyms. I do not mind I will be identified in the photos and videos.

Photographs _____YES   _____NO;
Videos   _____YES   _____NO

The procedures are as follows. I will make an appointment for an interview at a time of my convenience in convenient places. I agree to accept the informal interviews and conversations in observations. The topics of the interview/conversations are my learning/working/life experiences in the learning community program, my prior learning/working/life experiences, and my present view of this learning community program. The interview will take about one hour. It will be audio taped.

The benefits for me are that I will have a chance to reflect on my learning/working/life experiences, which may help me to find out the effective learning strategies and the learning barriers. The researchers also hope to understand how knowledge could be constructed in the context of a geographical learning community.

The data will be kept confidential throughout the study. All identifiers will be removed, and only the researchers can access individually identifiable information. The recordings will be transcribed with all individually identifiable information replaced by pseudonyms. The only exception to this procedure of confidentiality will be if the participants request that their names and/or photos be publicly identified. Original recordings will be destroyed no later than May 18, 2013.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this research. I can withdraw from this project at any time, or for any reason.

The investigators will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project.

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

___**Bo Chang**_____   _____   _____

Name of Researcher   Signature   Date

Telephone: 706-247-6269
Email: changbo111@sohu.com

_____   _____   _____
 Name of Participant   **Signature**   **Date**

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.
Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

学习社区知识构建项目意向表

我,_____,同意参与由美国佐治亚大学终身教育、管理和政策系的博士生常波 **(706-247-6269)**主持的博士研究课题：学习型社区里的知识构建— 以中国上海闸北学习型社区为案例。我是 自愿参与这项研究的。我可以无条件地拒绝参与或中途停止参与这项研究。我不会由此而受到惩罚或受到 任何损失。我可以要求所有关于我的信息退还给我，可以要求从研究记录中删除或摧毁关于我的个人信 息。

这项研究的目的是探索在中国上海的闸北学习型社区中学习者是如何构建知识的。如果我自愿参与这项研 究，我将会参与如下的一些事情:
    4. 签署采访意向表。
    5. 提供我的学习/工作/生活的信息，资料或实物,提供学习计划,或相关的关于学习社区的资 料。
    6. 参与大约一个多小时的录音采访。参访内容包括我的学习/工作/生活经历，学习/工作活 动，以及我对中国学习社区的一些观点。
    5. 假如需要，参与一个简短的后续采访。
我同意研究者使用摄影和摄像，以及在使用假名的情况下公开使用这些摄影照片和录像。我不介意别人能 够在照片和录像中识别出我的身份。

照片 _____同意被使用   _____不同意被使用;
录像 _____同意被使用   _____不同意被使用

具体的参与操作程序如下：我会和研究者约定一个便于采访的时间和地点。我也同意接受非正式的访谈和 谈话。访谈/谈话的内容是关于我的学习/工作/生活的经历，我以前的学习/工作/生活经历，以及我对学习社 区学习活动的一些观点。采访约进行一个小时。采访将会被录音。

我参与这项研究所享有的益处是：我将有机会反思我的学习/工作/生活经历，这将有助于我找出有效的学习 策略和学习障碍。研究者也可以借此理解在学习社区的环境下学习者是如何构建知识的。

数据在整个研究过程中将会被保密。在数据被公开引用之前，所有的身份识别标识将会被抹掉，只有研究 者可以查阅被研究者的个人识别信息。所有的录音记录将会被转化成文字，个人的身份识别信息将会被假 名所代替。除非被调查者要求在采访/照片/录像可以全部使用真名，否则所有的保密工作将使用如上程序。 原始数据记录将于 **2013** 年 **5** 月 **18** 号之前被销毁。

参与这项研究没有可预见性的危险。我可以随时无条件地撤离参与这个研究项目。

研究者将会回答我目前或项目进行期间的任何关于这项研究的信息。

我在这个意向表上签字同意参与这个研究项目。我会收到一个签了名的复制意向表以作为我的保存记录。

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常波	常波	2008 年 7 月 8 日
研究者的名字	签 名	日 期

电话: 美国：1-706-247-6269 ；上海：13636677936

电子邮件: **changbo111@sohu.com**

参与者姓名	签 名	日 期

请在两份意向表上签字，一份自己保留，一份交与研究者

若有其它关于作为研究参与者的问题，您可以联系美国佐治亚大学机构审阅委员会的主席。联系方式：
The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; 电话： (706) 542-3199; E-Mail 地址： IRB@uga.edu

Recruiting research participants

I am a third-year doctoral student in Adult Education at the University of Georgia, and my research interest focuses on knowledge construction in learning community. The topic of my dissertation is: Knowledge Construction in the Learning Community: A Case Study of Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community in China. The purpose of this study is to explore how knowledge is constructed in learning community, and how social cultural factors and learning community factors shape the patterns of knowledge construction. I plan to collect my data in this summer from June to August, and I need to recruit a few policy makers and administrators , a few instructors, and about 20 learners who study in the Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community to participate to my study. The requirements for qualification, activities, and benefits are as follows:

Requirements for qualification：

- The lives of the learners were impacted by the social-cultural changes within the past five to twenty years. More specifically, the learners should belong to one of the five groups: unemployed workers, migrant workers, elderly people, white-collar workers, and leaders.
- The learners selected should have lived in the local community for at least one year (except for the migrants).
- The learners selected could present a range of genders, ages, careers, and social positions.
- The administrators and the instructors/facilitators should work in the learning community for at least one year.
- All the participants including migrants and older adults should understand Mandarin and can speak Mandarin.

Activities：

1. About one hour face-to-face audio taped interview about your learning/working/life experiences in the learning community program, your prior learning/working/life experiences, and your present view of this learning community program; some may be asked to provide some documents reflecting your learning/working/life experiences.

2. All interviews are conducted in Chinese, at a time and place convenient for you.

Benefits：

1. The learners will have a chance to reflect on their learning/working/life experiences, which may help them to find out the effective learning strategies and the learning barriers.

2. The learners, policy makers, administrators and instructors could be provided the major conclusions of the dissertation.

Please contact me if you are interested in my study. I appreciate all your help.

Contact： Bo Chang

Phone： 706-247-6269 (In U.S.A.), 13636677936 (In Shanghai)

Email address: changbo@uga.edu

诚招研究参与者

我是美国佐治亚大学终身教育、管理和政策系的三年级博士生常波，我的研究兴趣是学习社区里学习者的知识构建。我的论文题目是：学习型社区里的知识构建— 以中国上海闸北学习型社区为案例 (Knowledge Construction in the Learning Community: A Case Study of Shanghai Zhabei Learning Community in China)。这项研究的目的是探索在学习社区中学习者的知识如何构建，以及社会文化因素和学习社区因素等如何影响学习者知识构建的范式。我计划在2008年6月到7月开始正式收集论文数据。我需要采访大约20个正在或曾经在上海闸北社区学习的学员。被研究者的具体要求，所进行的活动以及参与这项研究活动所享有的益处如下：

具体要求：

1. 在最近的 5 到 20 年内学习者的生活直接受到了社会-文化变革的影响。具体而言，学习者应该属于下列五类群体之一：曾经或正在下岗失业的人员，老年人，外来民工，白领，企业领导。

2. 除外来民工外，学习者应该在闸北区至少居住一年。

3. 所有的参与者能听懂并且会说普通话。

参与的活动：

1. 参与一个小时左右面对面的录音采访。采访内容包括你在闸北社区中的学习/工作/生活经历，你以前的学习/工作/生活经历，以及你对于闸北社区提供的课程和学习活动的看法。研究者可能会要求有些接受采访的人提供一些反应其学习/工作/生活的文档。

2. 所有的采访将使用普通话进行。研究者将会和接受采访的人协商便利的时间和地点进行采访。

参与的益处：

1. 学习者将有机会反思其学习/工作/生活经历。这将有助于他们找出有效的学习策略和障碍。

2. 学习者将有机会获得本研究的主要结论。

如果您有意向参与我的这项研究，请与我进行联系。我非常感谢您给予的帮助。

联系人：常波

电话：13636677936 (上海)， 706-247-6269 (美国)

电子邮箱: changbo@uga.edu

Note: The highlighted yellow color indicates the differences between the original Chinese data and the back-translated Chinese data. Some of the differences are just different ways of expressing the same meaning. In the revision notes, I revised some parts of my English translation or Zhang's back translation that have discrepancies in meaning.

No. 1	Data
Original Chinese data	波：我知道你的地书院还曾参加过一些非营利性活动。我想其中一定有一些有趣的故事。 林：哈哈，是的。太多了。你比方说回国的华侨，英国的，美国的，加拿大的，说，"老先生，我在电视里看到你了。原来你在这里阿。你看上去要比比荧幕上好多了。"我们的活动报纸上也见报。还有些外国人请我教教她[们]。"目前，我在教一个美国学生。她喜欢汉语和中国文化，他请我做她的老师。
Back translated Chinese data	波：我知道你的地面书法团还曾参加过一些非营利性活动。我想其中一定有一些有趣的故事。 林：哈哈，是的。有很多。比如说，有些英国、美国和加拿大的华人跟我说："噢，老先生，我们在电视上见过你。你到这儿来写了。你看上去要比电视上好的多"。报纸上也报道过我们的活动。有些外国人请我教他们写字。目前，我在教一个美国学生。她喜欢汉语和中国文化，她要我做她的老师。
Translated English data	Bo: I know that your ground calligraphy group also performed for non-profit events. I guess there must have been many interesting stories. Lin: Ha-ha, yeah. Too many. For example, some Chinese from England, America, and Canada told me: "Oh, Old Mr., we saw you on TV. Oh, you are writing here. You look much better than you do on TV." Our activities were also reported in the newspaper. Some foreigners asked me to teach them how to write. Now, I am the mentor of a student from America. She loves the Chinese language and Chinese culture and she asked me to be her mentor.
Revision notes	

No. 2	Data
Original Chinese data	波：那你谈谈你在上海一日游的经历吧. 洪：很开心的啊。（笑）因为到规划馆，我们一般的人（平常）谁去啊。他们（妇联）为我们组织了这次旅游。我们看到了这座城市，哎呀，这么大，看它的发展，以前是什么样子，现在是什

	么样子。后来又到世纪公园啊，海底观光隧道啊。 波：这让你大开眼界吧。 洪：是的。我们更了解上海了。像我的家庭，我老公开[出租]车嘛，还可以带我去很多地方。有的（外地媳妇）从来没出去过的。<mark>那她们一看，</mark>真的是大开眼界啊。<mark>像那个观光隧道从来没看过，</mark>一看，哎呀，是这个样子的。都感到很惊讶的。
Back translated Chinese data	波：跟我讲一下你在上海的一日游吧。 洪：很开心（笑）。我们普通人，谁会去上海城市展览馆？他们妇联）为我们组织了这次旅游。我们看到了这座城市，哦，太大了。我们看到了它的发展，看到了它以前的样子，现在的样子。后来我们去了世纪公园，外滩观光隧道。 波：这让你大开眼界吧。 洪：是的。我们更了解上海了。像我的家庭，我老公是出租车司机，可以带我去很多地方。有些（外地媳妇）从来没有去过。<mark>他们看见（外滩观光隧道），</mark>真是大开眼界。<mark>外滩观光隧道，他们从来没见过</mark>。他们看见了，噢，这样的。（他们）都太吃惊了。
Translated English data	Bo:　Tell me about your one-day trip in Shanghai. Hong: Very happy. [Laugh]. Cause for the Shanghai Urban Planning Exhibition Hall, we common people, who would go there? They [the Women's Federation] organized this trip for us. We saw this city, OH, so big! We saw its development, what it looked like before, and what it looked like now. Later we went to the Century Park, and the Bund Sightseeing Tunnel. Bo:　This enlarged your horizons. Hong: Yes, we got to know Shanghai much better. Like our family, my Laogong is a taxi driver and can take me to some places. Some [migrant wives] have never been there. When they saw it [the Bund Sightseeing Tunnel], that really opened [their] eyes! That Bund Sightseeing Tunnel, they have never seen it. They saw it, oh, it looks like this way. [They] all felt so surprised!
Revision notes	

No. 3	Data
Original Chinese data	琼：知识的另一个重要来源还有就是<mark>自己去领悟。</mark> 波：怎么个<mark>领悟？</mark> 琼：<mark>自己看，看马路上走的人啊，</mark>哎，这个人走得很有风度，走上去步伐非常好看，为什么呢？<mark>我要怎么走？</mark>我想向他学学看. 波： 但是人走<mark>猫步</mark>和在真实生活中走路是不同的。 琼：两者很相似。猫步在舞台比较夸张一点。真正的猫步是从生活中效仿的，<mark>经过改良和提高就完全可以了。</mark>

Back translated Chinese data	琼：知识的另一个重要来源是==一个人的洞察力。==
	波：如何==洞察？==
	琼：==观察。观察街上人走路。==噢，这个人走得很优雅，他走路的样子很好看。为什么？==我要怎么才能走出这个样子？==我想要向他学习。
	波：但是人在==T 台上走路==和在真实生活中走路是不同的。
	琼：两者很像。T 台上更加夸张。真正的 T 台走步是模仿生活的，==经过美化和提高。==
Translated English data	Qiong: Another important source of knowledge is from one's perception.
	Bo: How?
	Qiong: Observation. Observe people walking in the street. Oh, this person walked so elegantly, and his walk looks very nice. Why? How can I walk that way? I want to learn from him.
	Bo: But the way one walks on the catwalk is different from how one walks in real life.
	Qiong: They are both very similar. The catwalk is more exaggerated. The real catwalk is simulated from life, and is refined and improved.
Revision notes	

No. 4	Data
Original Chinese data	波：还有其它什么原因促使你学上海话的？
	洪：就是你可以跟人砍价啊。你去买东西嘛，人家一听, 你是外地的，人家肯定要宰你的，价钱就要多一点。==人家一听，哎，你会上海话，肯定要对你好一点啊。==我们学了上海话，在家里的地位也提高了（笑）。就是听你是外地人，但是又听你讲上海话，就知道你来的时间长嘛。有些事情都了解，他不好骗你的，是吧。==这就是有一些实惠方面的。==我说，"阿拉也是上海人"，（笑），冒充嘛，是吧。有的人他只为了砍价，为了讨你好嘛，哦，==跟你讲嘛。==
Back translated Chinese data	波：有什么其它原因促使你学上海话？
	洪：你可以讨价还价。买东西的时候，他们听见你说话，哦，他们知道你是外地人，他们会宰你的，价格就会贵。==如果他们听你说上海话，==他们对你态度就会好些。学了上海话，我们家庭地位也提高了（笑）。即使他们知道你是外地人，听到你说上海话，他们知道你在上海呆了很长时间，你很了解情况，他们也不敢骗你，对吧？==这是很实际的观点。==我说：阿拉（上海方言"我是"）上海人（笑），假装（上海人），是吧？有些人只不过是想要和你讨价还价，（所以）奉承你，哦，==我告诉你。==
Translated English data	Bo: What else motivated you to learn Shanghai dialect?
	Hong: You can bargain with the prices. When you go shopping, they hear what you say, oh, they know you are outsider, they will rip you

off, and the price will be higher. If they hear you speak Shanghai dialect, they will treat you better. We learned Shanghai dialect, our status in the family also increased [laugh]…Even if they know you are a migrant, they hear you are speaking Shanghai dialect, they know you stayed in Shanghai for quite a long time, and know you know some things well, he dares not cheat you, right? This is from a very practical point of view. I said: A'La [Shanghai dialect for "I am"] Shanghainese. [Laugh], pretend [to be a Shanghainese], right? Some people just want to bargain with you about the prices and [therefore] flatter you, oh, I tell you.

Revision notes	English data: If they hear you speak Shanghai dialect— they hear, hi, you speak Shanghai dialect Note: The part at the left side of the dash is the phrase that needs to be revised, the part at the right side of the dash is the phrase that has been revised. The same for the other revision notes.

No. 5	Data
Original Chinese data	孙：92 年, 那时候改制。我们这些未满 10 年的一锅给端掉了,也不管你优秀不优秀......92 年是社会变革嘛，一个转折点。然后一下变到.......这两年步伐越来越快了。就像轮胎一样，从 92 年开始转了，转到现在越来越快了。
Back translated Chinese data	孙：1992 年, 那个时候改革。那些工作不到十年的人全下岗了，不管你优秀与否......1992 年是一个社会变革，一个转折点。然后，然后一下变得.......最近这两年，改革的步伐越来越快，象车轮，1992 年开始转动，到现在转得越来越快。
Translated English data	Sun: In 1992, at that time, there's a reform. We who worked for less than ten years were totally laid-off , no matter whether you were excellent or not, ….1992 was a social change, a turning point…Then it became…these recent two years, [the reform step] became quicker and quicker, like a wheel, it started to turn from 1992, and is turning quicker and quicker until now.
Revision notes	Back translation: 那些—我们这些

No. 6	Data
Original Chinese data	我觉得呢，就是通过做项目，然后集体来那个集思广益。这种呢是一种…怎么说呢，在目前也是一种非常非常好的一种学习方式嘛，就是它培养了一种协作精神嘛，是哇？另一方面呢实际上也是像你说的，它也是一种作为创新的一个过程嘛。这个不是上面的，是来自我们的实践工作。是在日常工作中，我们慢慢地慢慢地学做事情，发现有一条什么捷径啊，或者什么样的方法，然后

	想通过试一下这个方法是否可行，是否可以推广。我们都尽力去想（作为团队的一员）我能做什么。
Back translated Chinese data	豪: 我觉得，<mark>我们是通过做项目获得集体智慧</mark>。这，怎么说呢，在目前这是一种很好的学习方式，<mark>培养了一种合作精神</mark>，对吧？同时就像你说的，这是一个（知识）<mark>更新</mark>的过程。这个不是<mark>官方的</mark>，是我们的实践工作。在日常工作中，我们慢慢学做事，寻找捷径，或者(好点儿的)方法。然后我们进行尝试，看看这个方法好不好，可不可以推广。我们都尽了最大努力，（想想作为团队的一员）我能做什么。
Translated English data	Hao: I feel, it is through doing projects that we pool the wisdom of the group. It is, how to say…, currently it is a good way of learning, and it nurtures a collaborative spirit, right? and at the same time, like you said, it is a process of [knowledge] <mark>innovation</mark>. …This is not from the authorities, it is from our practical work. In our daily work, we slowly learn to do things day after day, and find a shortcut, or a somewhat [good] method. Then we want to try and see if this method is good, and can be spread [to other groups] …We all try our best, [to figure out] what I can do [as one of the team members].
Revision notes	In back translation: 更新—创新

No. 7	Data
Original Chinese data	杨：我会说，"噢，你这个唱的很好"。她说，"真的"？我就会鼓励她。然后我就想它是怎么唱的？ 波：然后你就反过来问老师？ 杨：哎。<mark>对对对</mark>。老师他不会笑我的。因为她是老师吗，我是学生嘛，应该我比她低。但是<mark>同学之间</mark>感觉就有点。。
Back translated Chinese data	杨：我说，"噢，你唱的真好"。她说，"真的"？我说，"是的"。我赞扬了她，然后我想，呃，她怎么会唱得那么好？ 波：然后你问你的老师？ 杨：<mark>是的</mark>。老师不会笑我。因为她是我们的老师，我是她的学生；(专业上）我应该比她低。但是同学中（如果我问他们怎么会唱得那么好），就点儿（尴尬）。
Translated English data	Yang: I said, "oh, you sang pretty well." She said: "really?" I said, "yes." I praised her, then I thought, eh, how did she sing that well? Bo: Then you asked your instructor? Yang: Yes….The instructor would not laugh at me. Because she is our instructor, I am her student; I should be lower than her [professionally]. But among the classmates, it's kind of …[embarrassing if I ask my classmates how they sing so well].
Revision notes	

No. 8	Data
Original Chinese data	我说为什么呢。（他说）"为什么，你看你照片拍的那么好；我要是来<mark>管</mark>这些人，我照片没人家拍的好"。我说，"哎呀，你管组织工作，你别管拍照片"。最后…他还是没来。他说，"我不去了，我不去了，<mark>吓死了</mark>（他开玩笑）"。
Back translated Chinese data	江：我问他为什么？（他说）"为什么？你看你拍了很好的照片。如果我来<mark>组织</mark>这些人，我的照相技术不会比其他人好"。我说，"噢，你只需要负责组织工作，别担心照相的事情"。最后…他没来。他说，"我不行，我不能来，<mark>我怕</mark>（他开玩笑）"。
Translated English data	Jiang: I asked him why? [He said] "Why? You see you took good pictures. If I come and manage these people, my photography skills are not better than others." I said, "Oh, you only need to take charge of the management work, don't worry about the photography." In the end …he did not come. He said, "I can't, I cannot go, I am freaked out [he is joking]."
Revision notes	

No. 9	Data
Original Chinese data	波：这个共识你们是怎么达成的？ 朗：那要靠<mark>班组长</mark>了，对于同一事物有人觉得是这样做比较好，有人觉得是那样做比较好。如果在具体的工作中<mark>那样做是不对的</mark>，那我就去通过询问领导啊，汇报上级啊，达成共识，或去互相沟通看别的<mark>部门</mark>，<mark>看他们是怎么样做的</mark>。必要的话，我作为<mark>班组长会与相关班组协调一下，把事情一定要解决掉</mark>。
Back translated Chinese data	波：（团队工作中）你怎样达成一致？ 朗：这要看<mark>团队领导者</mark>。同一个问题，有人会这样想比较好，有人会想那样比较好。但实践中的工作中<mark>那是不正确的</mark>。然后我（作为团队领导者）会向领导咨询，向上级领导汇报情况，达成一致，或者和其它组织交流，<mark>看看他们如何处理类似的问题</mark>。必要的话，我作为<mark>团队领导会与相关团队合作，解决问题</mark>。
Translated English data	Bo: How did you come to an agreement [in your group work]? Lang: It depends on the team leader. For the same issue, some may think this way is better, some may think that way is better. But in practical work, it may not be right. Then I [as a team leader]) would consult the leaders, report this situation to the upper leaders for an agreement, or communicate with the other <mark>organizations</mark> and see how they dealt with similar issues…Then if necessary, I as a team leader would collaborate with the relevant teams, and solve the problems.
Revision notes	

No. 10	Data
Original Chinese data	江：这个东西呢，大多数呢，你看，<mark>还是比较统一起来的</mark>。很少碰到有争议的，碰到有争议的，大家就把它<mark>抛掉</mark>。<mark>不同意见的东西，不参选。</mark>
Back translated Chinese data	江：对于这种事情，你看，大部分时候，<mark>你需要达成一致</mark>。我们很少会有争议。如果有的话，我们会<mark>不要它</mark>。<mark>我们不会选择引起争论的产品。</mark>
Translated English data	Jiang:　For this stuff, you see, most of time, you need to have agreement. We seldom had controversy. If so, then we just threw it away. The products that cause disputes would not be selected.
Revision notes	

No. 11	Data
Original Chinese data	我觉得年岁大了观念要转变。不能老和我以前这个比。现在我回到社区工作。<mark>况且年龄上去了，在以前的青春的红红火火的都一去不复返了，</mark>我要面对现实。<mark>完了我就做我们街道的就业援助员。</mark>
Back translated Chinese data	万：现在我年纪大了，我想我应该改变思想（不要想着学习是要找到高工资的好工作）。我不能仍然把现在的工作和以前的（高工资工作）比较。现在我在社区工作（工资低）。<mark>不管怎样，我不年轻了，充满热情的青年时代不会再回来了</mark>。我必须面对这个现实。<mark>后来我就是社区（低收入）一名就业助理。</mark>
Translated English data	Wan: I think I should change my mind [and not think learning to get a better job with a high salary] since I am old now. I cannot continue to compare my current job to my previous job [which had a higher salary]. Now I work in the community [with a low salary]. Anyway, I am not young anymore, and the time of enthusiastic youth will not be back again. I must face this reality. Later I was an employment assistant in the community [with a low salary].
Revision notes	

No. 12	Data
Original Chinese data	<mark>七嘴八舌呢在我们这个层面的一般不会有的。我们叫察言观色。</mark>我们有<mark>话</mark>都不是说出来的。<mark>都放在肚子里面</mark>。我们说话也非常<mark>婉转</mark>。我要考虑的问题是失败的问题。你让我做，成功的必然是很有<mark>面子</mark>的。失败了呢？会非常没有面子。干我们这一行的，<mark>中庸之道。</mark>
Back translated Chinese data	

	查：<mark>我们在领导岗位上不能随性地和别人分享观点。我们只是观察</mark>。我们有些<mark>想法</mark>，但是我们不会说出来，<mark>我们在心里想</mark>。我们讲话很<mark>小心谨慎</mark>。我担心的是<mark>（可能）失败</mark>。你让我去做，如果我能成功，我会感到<mark>骄傲</mark>。如果我失败了呢？我会觉得丢脸。做我们这种（领导）工作，（你需要）<mark>谦虚</mark>。
Translated English data	Chau: We in leadership positions did not spontaneously share our ideas with others. <mark>We only observed.</mark> We had some ideas, but we did not speak them out, we ruminated in our minds. We talked very delicately and reservedly. What I am concerned about is the [the possibilities of] failure. You ask me to do this, if I can do it successfully, I will <mark>feel honored</mark>. What if I fail? I will feel loss of face…To do the kind of [leadership]work as we do, [you need to be] <mark>moderate.</mark>
Revision notes	In English translation data: We only observed— we only observed and read others' minds Moderate— Moderate [or zhongyong in Chinese]

No. 13	Data
Original Chinese data	主要是领导换来换去，这个这种做法，那个那种做法。像以前史支持搞"民工之家"。后来<mark>换了个领导来</mark>，他<mark>觉得</mark>，"什么？民工之家"？他脑子里没那个概念。每个领导<mark>做法</mark>不一样。
Back translated Chinese data	沈：主要问题是领导多变。这位领导用这个方法，那位领导用那个方法。比如过去史支持"移民之家"。<mark>后来新领导来了</mark>，<mark>说</mark>，"什么？移民之家"？他脑子里没有这个概念。每个领导有不同的<mark>策略</mark>。
Translated English data	Shen: The main problem is that the leaders are changeable. This leader used this method, that leader used that method. For example, in the past, Shi supported the Migrant Home. Later the new leader came, he felt, "what? Migrant Home?" His mind had no such concept. Every leader has a different strategy.
Revision notes	In back translation, 说—觉得 In English translation data: Every leader has a different strategy— Every leader has his own way

No. 14	Data
Original Chinese data	我们现在搞的比较多的就是"科学用电，安全用电"的宣传。还有呢，在夏天，<mark>我们就会到社区进行一些宣传，怎样才是一个合理的用电</mark>。<mark>我们活动的台头叫"青春光明行"</mark>。青春嘛就是团员青年，光明行是指<mark>光明使者</mark>。在这个<mark>抬头下</mark>，我们搞的活动内容很多。
Back translated Chinese data	连：我们现在组织得的比较多的就是宣传"科学、安全用电"的观

念。另外，夏天我们到社区宣传如何合理用电。我们活动是在"青年光明行动"的口号下开展的。青年是指青年人，光明是指（电力带来的）光亮。在"青年光明行动"的指导下，我们组织了很多活动。

Translated English data	Lian: The activities we organized most now are broadcasting the idea of "how to use the electricity scientifically and safely." Besides, in summer, we went to the local community to broadcast how to use electricity reasonably. Our activities were organized under the slogan of "Bright action of the youth." *Youth* refers to the young people, *bright* refers to the bright lights [provided by electricity]. With the discourse of "Bright action of the youth," we organized many activities.
Revision notes	In back translation: 指导下—口号下 In English translation data: Lights: angel of the bright light

No. 15	Data
Original Chinese data	我们金梦时装队的演出活动包括学员娱乐性质的和义务演出性质的。义务演出主要为社区居民服务。比如每年的纳凉晚会，我们也为红十字募捐。今年汶川地震我们就进行了赈灾义演。每次的义演活动都是根据活动主题排练。
Back translated Chinese data	李：我们金梦时尚队有娱乐演出和义务演出。义务演出主要面向社区。比如说，我们在社区每年组织的清凉一季晚会上演出。我们也为红十字捐款演出。今年我们为汶川地震捐款基金演出。每次我们都为这些非赢利活动的主题排练节目。
Translated English data	Li: Our Golden Dream Fashion Team has entertainment performances and volunteer performances. Volunteer performances mainly serve the local community. For example, we performed at the Cool-Season Party which is organized every year in the community. We also performed for the Red Cross Donation Drive. This year, we performed for the Wen Chuan Earthquake Donation Fund. Each time we rehearsed a program with a theme based on these non-profit activities.
Revision notes	In back translation: 每次我们都为这些非赢利活动的主题排练节目—每次的义演活动都是根据活动主题排练。

No. 16	Data
Original Chinese data	波：那基本上是闸北区工会直接管你们企业？ 尊：是…我还有个上级部门我们要尊重他们的。因为咱们国家是这样的，它还在控制。区到局，直接管你的。党务啊工会啊活动，他直接贯彻。

Back translated Chinese data	尊：和中企的，中介的。局一级的(我都认识)...大家<mark>都熟</mark>了... 波：就是<mark>这条垂直线上的各个环节上的人</mark>你都熟. 尊：哎 波：主要通过工会这条线？ 尊：哎。还有<mark>党务</mark>这条线。你不要和党务这条线反抗，他们不买你的账的。 波：基本上，闸北区工会监管你们的企业？ 尊：是的。<mark>我们也要尊重我们的上级政府部门。</mark>因为我们的国家就是这样，是控制的。从<mark>街道到部门，</mark>（它）直接<mark>控制</mark>你。党办和工会的活动（由上至下）直接<mark>执行</mark>。 尊：（我从）公司、代理机构、部门（认识人）。我们<mark>互相认识。</mark> 波：你认识由上至下<mark>这个体系中各个部门</mark>的人。 尊：是的。 波：主要通过工会？ 尊：还有党办。不要对抗党办这个体系。（如果你对抗），他们不会买账。
Translated English data	Bo: Basically Zhabei District Labor Union supervises your enterprise? Zun: Yes…<mark>We also respect our upper governmental institutions</mark>… Because our country is like this, it is still in control. From the district to the bureau, [it] directly control you. Activities by the Party Affairs Divisions and the Labor Unions are directly carried out [from the top-down]… Zun: [I got to know people from] enterprises, agents, at the level of the Bureau…We knew each other well… <mark>Bo: You know people from different divisions and institutions from the hierarchical system?</mark> Zun: Yes. Bo: Mainly through the Labor Union? Zun: And also through the system of the Party Affairs. Do not resist the system of the Party Affairs. They will not buy it [if you resist them]
Revision notes	In back translation: 从街道到部门--从区到局 In English translation: We also respect our upper governmental institutions—we also have our upper governmental institutions we have to respect. You know people from different divisions and institutions from the hierarchical system? —You know people from different links in the hierarchical system?

No. 17	Data
Original Chinese data	波：如果是你们老乡有这种机会，他们会告诉你吗？ 沈：会告诉我们的。不过因为我们老乡还没做这行。<mark>每个地方都</mark>

	是不一样的，你看江苏那边的人做海鲜生意挺多的，江西的都做铝合金这行，我们安徽这帮的做清洁工作。
Back translated Chinese data	波：如果你的同乡有这样的机会，他们会告诉你吗/ 沈：会的。不过我的同乡不做这种生意。每个地方都有不同的优势。你看，江苏人大多数做水产生意，江西人做铝制品生意，我们安徽人做保洁工作。
Translated English data	Bo:　If the fellows from your hometown have such an opportunity, will they tell you? Shen:　Yes. However, the fellows from our hometown do not do this type of　business. Every place has a different priority. You see, people from Jiangsu province most of time do seafood business, people from Jiangxi do aluminium business, and we An'huinese do cleaning work.
Revision notes	

No. 18	Data
Original Chinese data	婷：我们的模式是以班级为基础培养团队学习。合唱团的成员每学期都是不一样的。（但是），团是固定的。每年都有。参加这个班基本是这个团队的。合唱班什么人都得要。出去演出，有任务了，要组团排练了，就要组成团了。
Back translated Chinese data	婷：我们的模式是以课堂教学为基础培养团体教学。不同学期会有不同的人参加合唱队，（但是），这支队伍是固定的，每年都有。（不同学期）参加（合唱）班的基本上是属于这（同一个）团队。每个人都可以加入[合唱]班。有表演任务的时候，我们需要排练，然后组成合唱队。
Translated English data	Ting: Our model is to nurture group learning based on classroom learning…The participants in the chorus program may be different in different semesters, [however,] the group is fixed, every year it exists. Those who participated in this [Chorus] program [in different semesters] basically belong to this [same Chorus] group. Everyone can join in the [Chorus] program. When we have a performance task, we need to rehearse, then we form the chorus group.
Revision notes	In back translation: 队伍— 团 In English translation: Everyone can join in the [Chorus] program— The [Chorus] program is open everyone