

Banzhuren and Classrooming: Democracy in the Chinese Classroom

Jiacheng Li*

East China Normal University, China

Jing Chen**

Children's Palace of China Welfare Institute, China

Abstract

The issue of education and democracy has become more and more important in China. This paper firstly explains the theory of democracy in Chinese classrooms, and then focuses on the Chinese banzhuren who is responsible for classrooming, an important educational area equal to instruction. We illustrate how Chinese students achieve development through classrooming, and show the activities, relationships and self-awareness from the perspective of developing the individual and community democratically. Finally, this paper discusses a new direction of democracy in Chinese classrooms in the global context, with the view of making education and society better.

Keywords: banzhuren, classrooming, democracy, education, progressive education

* Dr. Jiacheng Li is the assistant director of the Institute of Schooling Reform and Development, and a professor in the School of Education Science at East China Normal University, Shanghai. He is the author of *Caring for Life: School Reform in China* (2006), and the co-author of *School Leadership Reform in China* (2007) and *School Life and Student Development* (2009).

** Jing Chen is a researcher from Children's Palace of China Welfare Institute. She got her Master's degree from ECNU, and is now researching on student learning outside school.

The authors are grateful for the funding support from MOE of the People's Republic of China and East China Normal University (funding grant 11JJD880013), the help from Prof. Lan Ye, Dr. Claire Smrekar, Dr. Xiu Cravens, Dr. Barbara Stengel, Mr. Michael Logan, Miss Xuejiao Chen, and the comments and advice from the editors and reviewers.

Introduction

During the last three decades of significant and rapid changes in China, the issue of education and democracy has become more and more important in education research, practice and policy. With the relationship to the Progressive Education movement that began in the early decades of the 20th century, especially through John Dewey's 1919 visit (Wang, 2007), and an understanding of Dewey's *Democracy and Education* and other classic works, Chinese theorists and educators are now conducting rich practice and research on democracy in schools.

The classroom community is becoming a laboratory for democracy in today's China. This new kind of education is referred to as "classrooming" and mainly conducted by *banzhuren*, a very particular teacher in Chinese schools.

While visiting Chinese schools, one American principal wrote:

We talked at dinner about the state of Confucian traditions in current Chinese pedagogy, about commonalities between Dewey and Confucius, and about the importance of a role in Chinese schools that has no equal in the US. This person is a kind of general advisor, perhaps a classroom teacher for part of the day but more importantly a constant presence outside the classroom for the 40, 50, or 60 students in a typical Chinese classroom group. The revered figure in this role loops with the same group for several years in many cases, knowing each student and helping the whole group wherever and whenever they need, on and well beyond the campus. Our hosts pointed to that role as crucial in the experience of students... (Durnan, 2013)

This person is Chinese *banzhuren*, similar to the U.S.A.'s home classroom teacher, advisor or counselor, but actually very different. He or she is the leader of teachers, and the key person to develop the whole community of students by classrooming.

In this research, we put forward such questions:

1. How can classroom life contribute to democracy?
2. What can the Chinese *banzhuren* do to promote democracy in Chinese classrooms?
3. What is the direction of Chinese classrooming?

To answer these questions, we took three steps. The first was to understand the relationship between Chinese classroom life and democracy. We reread the books and articles from Progressive Education, especially from John Dewey, and rethought the meaning of democracy in contemporary China's context. In this way, we focused on the particularity of Chinese school and classroom life, and discussed the meaning of "classrooming". The second was to understand what Chinese *banzhurens* were really doing now by analyzing new data.

Finally, we would think more on the development of classrooming and banzhuren, with the view of promoting democracy in China.

Methodology

This article explains the theory and practice of democracy in Chinese classroom, and introduces some new educational concepts. So, philosophical thinking is needed. What's more, the authors will use the cases and onsite observation resources, mainly come from the *New Basic Education Project* (NBEP), to express the topic.

NBEP was conducted by professors, principals and teachers from 1994 with the aims of reforming the schooling and developing Chinese Education Science. The professors from East China Normal University and other universities are leading the project and collaborating with school educators and district leaders. The first author has been in the project for over 13 years, and has access to do observing, interviewing and data gathering, very similar to what Philip Jackson, the David Lee Shillinglaw Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus at the University of Chicago and the author of *Life in Classrooms* and *Untaught Lessons*, and his colleagues had done (Jackson, 1990; 1992; Jackson, Boostrom, & Hansen, 1998). For example, during March 2010 to June 2010, the author spent 29.5 days at the laboratory schools of NBEP with banzhurens to design, participate, observe and assess the classrooming.

During October 2011 to October 2012, as a visiting scholar, the first author spent totally 30 days visiting 17 schools at Nashville and Chicago, such as the University School of Nashville, Linden Waldorf School, and the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools. The classroom visiting, observing and interviewing at home and abroad gave the author many chances to reflect on democracy in the Chinese classroom.

We also surveyed several participants, mostly in December 2012. The questionnaire was designed by the authors, with a few years of critical thinking and experiments in Chinese classrooms. It's mainly about the students' development in classroom lives, and includes student and teacher questionnaire. Its contents can be divided into four aspects, educational expectation of banzhuren and students, practice of students and banzhuren in classroom, relationships between students and banzhuren, and self-assessment of banzhuren and students. We distributed our questionnaires in 17 NBEP schools that had been in the project for over 5 years, including elementary and junior high schools at Shanghai, Changzhou and Huaian, and recovered 6275 student questionnaire copies which include 5830 valid copies, as well as 546 banzhuren questionnaires copies and all of them are valid. Demographic information is as followed, and figures are shown in count followed by percentage in brackets.

Table 1

Demographic information of student questionnaire

Contents	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	3068	52.6%
	Female	2747	47.1%
Grade	The Fourth	2014	34.5%
	The Fifth	1904	32.7%
	The Sixth	1359	23.3%
	The Seventh	295	5.1%
	The Eighth	254	4.4%

Note. During the investigated 5830 students, 15 students miss the question of gender and 4 students miss the question of grade.

Table 2

Demographic information of banzhuren questionnaire

Contents	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	39	7.1%
	Female	506	92.7%
Grade	The Fourth	92	16.8%
	The Fifth	92	16.8%
	The Sixth	88	16.1%
	The Seventh	110	20.1%
	The Eighth	97	17.8%
	The Ninth	66	12.1%

Note. During the investigated 546 banzhurens, 1 banzhuren miss the question of gender and 1 banzhuren miss the question of grade.

Theoretical Framework

Dewey's Theory

Democracy is about the individual and society. Dewey said "If we eliminate the social factor from the child we are left only with an abstraction; if we eliminate the individual factor from society, we are left only with an inert and lifeless mass" (Dewey, 1897/1940, p. 6). In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey clearly shared his thought that, "A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 99).

Democracy is about a way of life. In Dewey's view, "A democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a model of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 87). Wang focused on Dewey's transformation from "associated living" to "communal life" (Wang, 2007, p. 105). Dewey put it best in *Democracy and Educational Administration* (Dewey, 1937/1940, p. 337-338) when he wrote:

The keynote of democracy as a way of life may be expressed, it seems to me, as the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate the living of men together: which is necessary from the standpoint of

both the general social welfare and the full development of human beings as individuals.

Such aim must be achieved mainly by education, and “education is the fundamental method of social progress and reform” (Dewey, 1897/1940, p. 15). The Chinese may agree with Dewey that “such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder” (Dewey, 1916/1944, p. 99).

The process and method to democracy just lie in life, and we can only *live* democratically to achieve democracy. Dewey (1938/1940) highlighted this insight in *Democracy and Education in the World of Today*.

Mutual respect, mutual toleration, give and take, the pooling of experiences, is ultimately the only method by which human beings can succeed in carrying on this experiment in which we are all engaged, the greatest experiment of humanity—that of living together in ways in which the life of each of us is at once profitable in the deepest sense of the word, profitable to himself and profitable and helpful in the building up of the individuality of others. (p. 370)

With such understandings of democracy, we see how democracy is a part of everyday life, both within classrooms and in the larger society.

Chinese Classroom

With Dewey’s ideas, we can say that the classroom is a *new world* for education and democracy.

Firstly, perceiving a classroom should be holistic. In Dewey’s opinion, the school should be organized in a new way: “It gets a chance to be a miniature community, and embryonic society” (Dewey, 1959, p. 18). We must pay very close attention to the words “*miniature*” and “*embryonic*” which need to be considered in a holistic way, not separately. It must be questioned again: what is a miniature school or embryonic school? In a Chinese teacher’s opinion, it will be a classroom about more than English or math teaching. Dewey’s theory can be accepted with the relation to Chinese philosophy, especially the holistic thinking way and the belief of “*Jia*” (home or family).

Secondly, the structure of daily life in Chinese classroom is quite complex. Chinese schooling is very different from western countries. We have large-scale class and school. In 2002, MOE conducted a national survey and divided the class size into six levels. According to the survey, the large class size means the class has 56-65 students and the super class size means it has more than 66 students. By 2010, the large class size has reached 20.03% in primary schools and 51.34% in junior high schools. The super class size has occupied 5.42% in primary schools and 14.76% in junior high schools (Liu, 2011). What’s more, our teachers always loop with students and only teach one or two subjects.

After many years' observation, the author is certain to say that the "home" classroom is central to Chinese students' school life. Students have their own classroom, and every morning the first thing is to go to the classroom. It is really a social base for students to go out to other places and return for more education, such as advice, courage or support. Students stay with the same group of peers for 3, 4, or 6 years, through all the grades of elementary or junior high school. Every student takes a rotating class job, and nearly all the decorating, managing and culturing of the classroom are conducted by students. They have a classroom meeting every week and ten-minute meeting every day, and there are many kinds of class meetings planned, organized and assessed by the students and banzhuren. As for the large class size, there are always a few groups with familiar members in different classes for enough time before changing to other groups. The group size varies with the age group, and you can find student council or student government in every classroom, not only at school level. Some classrooms even have their own clubs! Though Chinese teachers are always organized by offices and departments, most of them have a common space and focus, the classroom. With the development of classrooming, a new kind of teachers' organization actually is forming and becoming influential, which is led by the banzhuren (Li, 2010).

Thirdly, the classroom is a miniature and embryonic society. It is not only a place to study language, mathematics or science, but also a real world to live together, to develop individual and community, and to experience and experiment democracy. From the opening day to the commencement day, classroom lives are in the process with great uncertainty and complexity. It develops by, with and for the students. The students may experience all kinds of communal lives, including the social, economic and political lives with full of democratic potential. Noddings viewed that schools "like homes, are special places in the lives of children. They should be centers of stability and community" (Noddings, 2005, p. xxi). For the Chinese students, the most important space, time and organizations are in the classroom.

Classrooming as Democracy/Education

What happens in the classroom can be full of educative meanings. In China, *classrooming* is a formal education, conducted by the banzhuren and all of the students. The banzhuren always stays with the same class of students for 3 or even 5-6 years, and is responsible for the development of the class and students, with the leadership of other teachers and parents. Classrooming means transforming the social demands into the educational aims, process, and methods, or fulfilling the potential of lives in classroom. This is shown in the framework below.

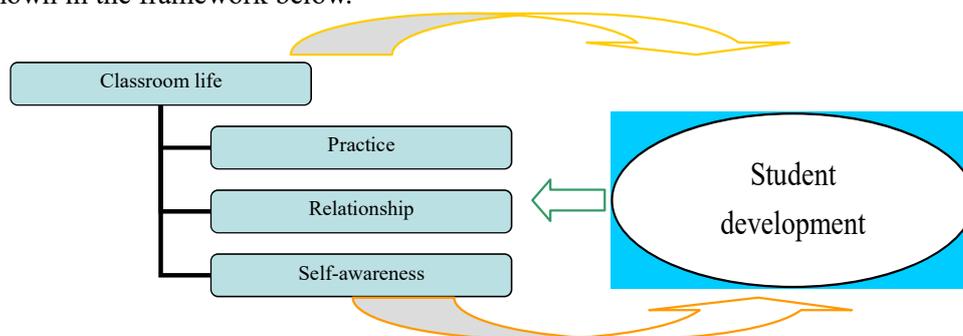


Figure 1. Relationship between classroom life and student development

We use the term “practice” to refer to all the purposeful actions of students. Different kinds of practice with different natures, challenges, contents and forms, will lead to different relationships between individual and community, and different development. In the classrooming context, the phases of students’ practice will change and the practice is comprehensive with emotional, rational and social dimensions. As a result, the community and students will develop together. The practices include:

- Classrooming leadership and service
- Classrooming culture
- Classroom meetings and thematic activities
- Learning content area subjects
- Involving the school or grade-level lives
- Collaborating with neighborhoods and families
- Collaborating with other social agents or natural world

Below is an example from an elementary class. This example is extracted from an article “On Student Leaders in Elementary School: Election, Operation and Assessment” written by Ms. Min Lu from Shanghai Huaping Elementary School in 2011. Ms. Lu has made great achievements as an excellent banzhuren. The article is a summary of her experience to educate student leaders in her own class.

According to the needs of different ages, we create many kinds of effective activities and give every student a chance to be a student leader, so as to help them developing themselves in the process of managing their class and organizing activities.

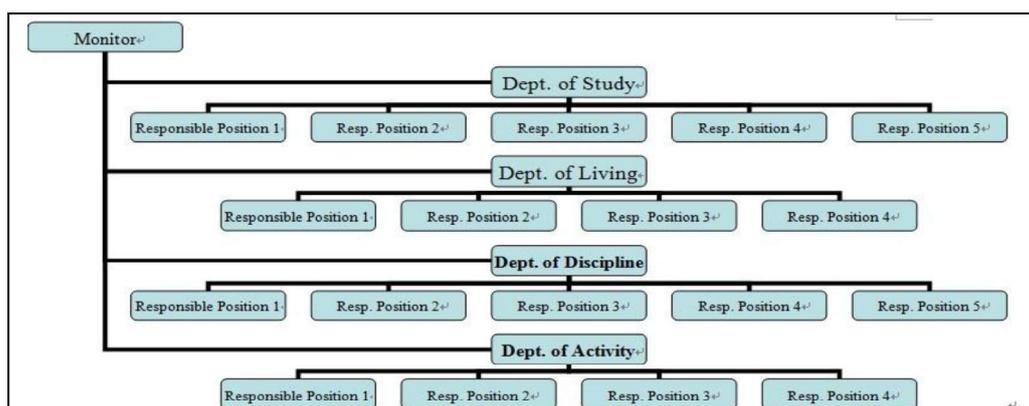
1. Changing the methods to select student leaders and providing every student the chance to be a student leader.

- At the Third Grade: By the way of layered selection to replace the old leaders. That is to say, 7 of the new student leaders will be chosen from those who have never been a leader, and 2 are from the old ones. What’s more, the 2 leaders will be treated as the mentors of other 7 leaders to help them getting familiar with all the things.

- At the Fourth Grade: Managing the class in the form of double class committee. Firstly, we select members of the two committees respectively, especially from those who have no or little experience of being a leader. And then, we group those members into “Committee A” and “Committee B”, according to their abilities and relationships between each other.

2. Changing the methods to operate class organizations with the view of arousing every student to take part into the classrooming.

- At the Third Grade: Improving the structure of class organization. We integrate the leader organization and “Classroom Responsible-Position” (some jobs related to the classroom service, such as cleaning the blackboard). The class monitor is responsible for all the things, and other departments should collaborate with him/her. In this way, we can establish the harmony relationship among different leaders and between leaders and students. For example, Ming is the monitor and the leader of Liang; but Ming is also a member of *Department of Discipline*, and Liang is responsible for the department, so Liang is the leader of Ming too.



- At the Fourth Grade: Improving the operation of class organization. We try to let “Committee A” and “Committee B” compete, collaborate and supervise each other, to develop a kind of atmosphere for them to get along well with each other and learn from each other.

3. Changing the methods to cultivate leaders, so as to develop all the students instead of part of them.

- Inside the class, we encourage the new leaders to learn from the experienced ones, and we also encourage the experienced ones to help developing the new ones during the organizing of class activities.

- Outside the class, we set up a platform to provide chances for both of them. They can participate in and organize some important school activities, which is not only very helpful to develop them, but also to improve the whole class’s influence in the school.

4. Changing the methods to evaluate leaders and achieve their self-awareness.

- The form of evaluation: we adapt different forms to evaluate, according to different situations, such as self-assessment, student leaders committee assessment, classroom meeting, department symposium, and reporting to all students on some activities.

- The period of evaluation: we pay attention to the length of the time period, so we evaluate by the month and term. As well as, we think highly of the process rather than the result.

(Written by Min Lu from Shanghai Huaping Elementary School. Translated by Jing Chen & Jiacheng Li. 2011, November.)

From the pictures below, the readers may get some impression of classrooming in China too. It’s worth mentioning that the name card in the first picture is very common to find in NBEP schools. From the name card, one can know the basic information of this class quickly. It contains class emblem, class song, class pictures, and curriculum schedule and so on.



Name card of one class

Decorating the classroom

Classroom librarians

Classroom meeting

The relationship between the individual and society is the key to democracy. There are different kinds of communities in the classroom, and the child is growing up in them. With the expansion of the groups, the students involve into different communities, and all of them are experiencing real lives. In this way, the relationship between individual and society can be shaped and reshaped.

The self-awareness of the students and educators is very important. Only with the awakening and development of self-awareness can long-life education be achieved, and democracy lives be learned and transformed again and again. It is not only about the sense of togetherness and oneness, or the sense of process and outcome, but also or more importantly about the sense of education and development in educational context.

Data Analysis

From the survey, we found that banzhurens from the NBEP laboratory schools afforded rich activities and relationships for the students, and most of the students became self-aware of their development through classrooming.

Practice

Firstly, students were greatly involved in the communities' development (see Figure 2). 73.9% students agree that "almost all the students like and participate actively", only 0.8% students greatly disagree with this. Secondly, students play an important role in organizing class activities (see Figure 3). 70.3% students agree that class activities are guided by teacher but designed and conducted by students, and only 6.2% students think that these are done fully by teacher. Thirdly, group work is quite common with a total of 81.1% students agreeing that "class activities are always conducted through group or team" (see Figure 4). Fourthly,

the reflective habit is developing too (see Figure 5), and totally 66.9% students agree that “student leaders will summarize for us when one semester or an event is over”.

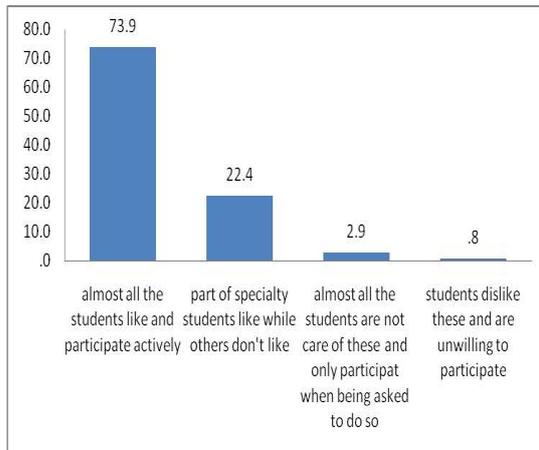


Figure 2. Situation of students' involvement into communities' development. Figures are shown in percentage (N=5811)

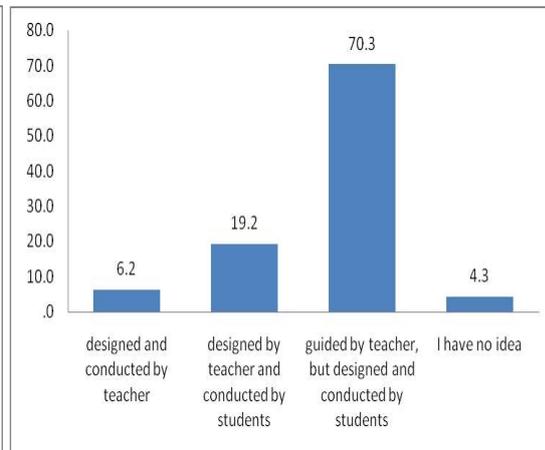


Figure 3. Organization of class activities
 Figures are shown in percentage (N=5761)

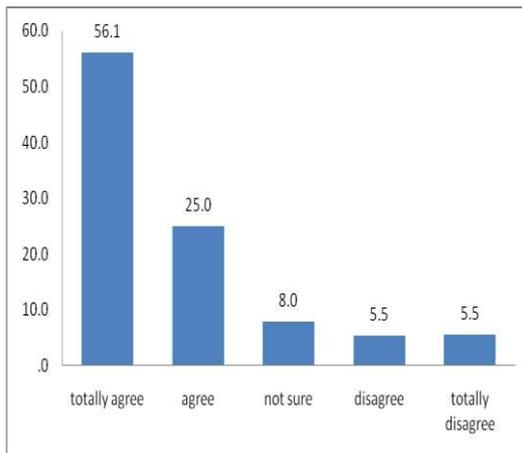


Figure 4. Class activities are always conducted through group or team. Figures are shown in percentage (N=5736)

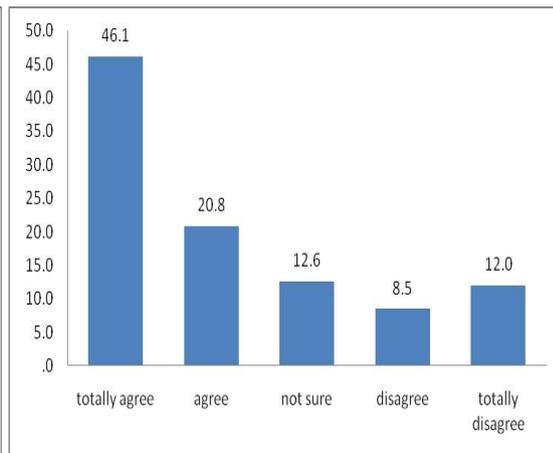


Figure 5. Student leaders will summarize for us when one semester or an event is over. Figures are shown in percentage (N=5674)

In Chinese schools, the student leader is a very important role for the classrooming and has great attraction for the students. We find that classroom election is becoming popular. 58.8% students point out that their student leaders will be selected in public and totally different with last year, which means more and more students have the chance to take part in classrooming. Based on this, most of the students start to cultivate their abilities in classrooming, because 78% of the students disagree that “most of classmates do not have the abilities to participate in classrooming”.

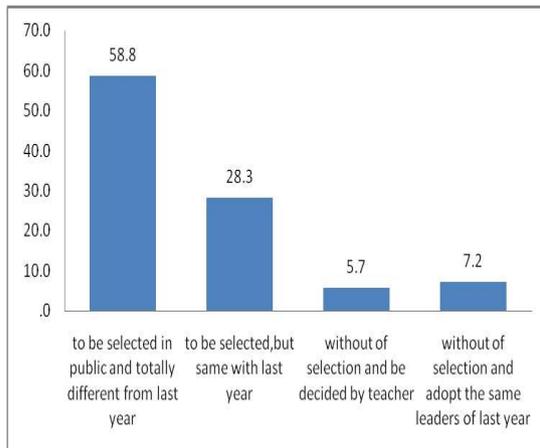


Figure 6. Selection of our student leaders. Figures are shown in percentage (N=5807)

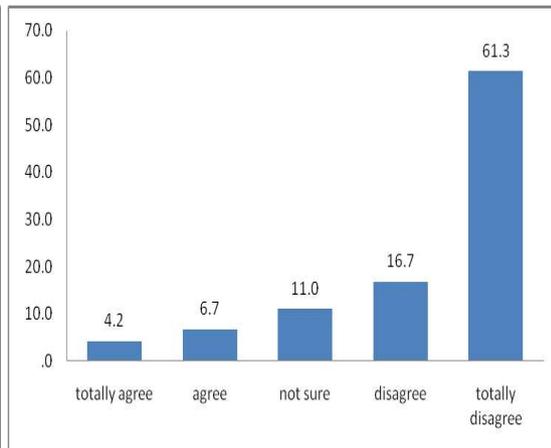


Figure 7. Most of classmates do not have the abilities to participate in classrooming. Figures are shown in percentage (N=5773)

Relationship

In the classroom, a communal relationship has been developed. Firstly, the most important relationship for students is with the banzhuren. From the perspective of students, they have been cared for and respected by their banzhuren. We can see from the survey that 86.4% students agree that the banzhuren will discuss with them or listen to their advice when organizing class activities (see Figure 8), and 74.5% of the students think that their banzhuren understand what they prefer and what they are talking about in their everyday lives (see Figure 9).

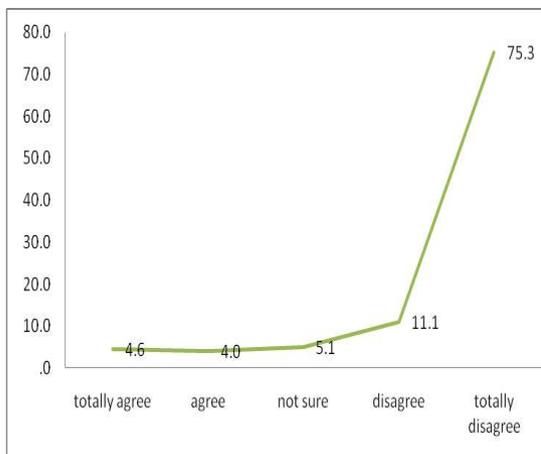


Figure 8. Banzhuren seldom organized class activities discussing with or listening to our advice. Figures are shown in percentage (N=5762)

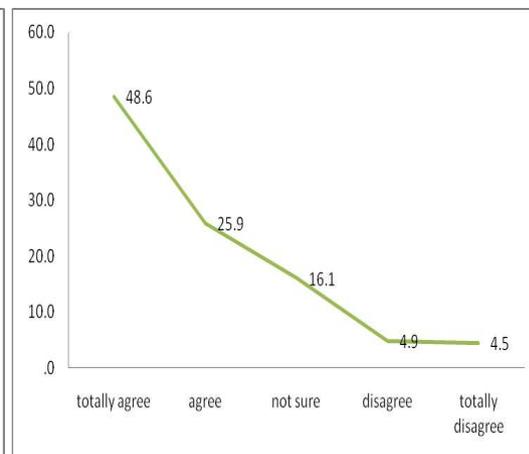


Figure 9. Banzhuren understand what we prefer and what we are talking about in everyday lives. Figures are shown in percentage (N=5744)

Secondly, they are developing relationships with students in other grades, too, which will effectively expand their views and awaken their awareness of community. 71.4% of the students have made friends with those from other higher or lower grades (see Figure 10). Finally, in some Chinese schools, the principal and other teacher leaders have not enough time or interest to work directly with students, but the survey shows that the student leaders are becoming more brave and active to work with the school leaders directly (see Figure 11).

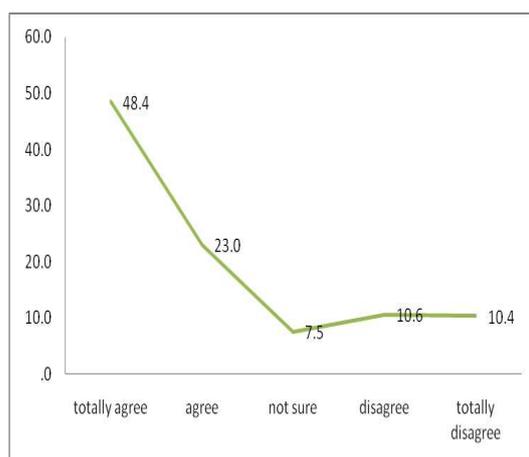


Figure 10. I have many friends in other grades (higher or lower grade)
 Figures are shown in percentage
 (N=5742)

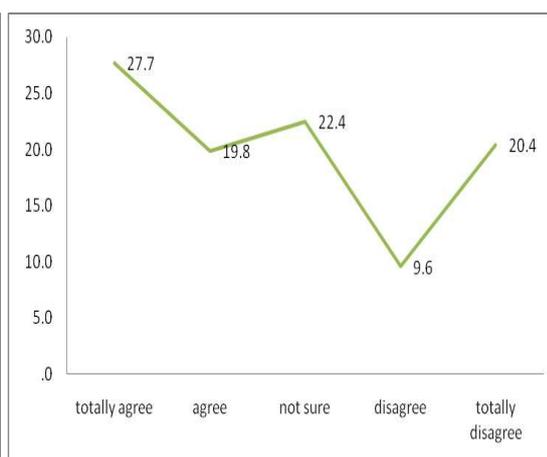


Figure 11. Student leaders often actively contact with school leaders or relevant departments for class work and activities
 Figures are shown in percentage (N=5721)

Self-awareness

Most of the students experienced love from the banzhuren, with 88.6% students agree that “banzhuren loves our class”. This is quite lovely! Over 68.3% students have done something for the classroom decorating or classroom culture. The self-esteem and sense of pride came from within. Comparing with instruction, 74.5% of the students said that they have obtained a unique experience and practice in their class activities or lives. All these positive experiences, self-efficiency and self-esteem are powerful for classrooming, education and democracy.

Table 3
Banzhuren loves our class.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Totally agree	4536	77.8%
Agree	628	10.8%
Not sure	403	6.9%
Disagree	125	2.1%
Totally disagree	97	1.7%

Note. During the investigated 5830 students, 41 students miss this question.

Table 4
I have made contributions to the class decorating, blackboard design and so on in this semester.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Totally agree	3131	53.7%
Agree	852	14.6%
Not sure	442	7.6%
Disagree	424	7.3%
Totally disagree	899	15.4%

Note. During the investigated 5830 students, 82 students miss this question.

Table 5

Comparing with instruction, I have obtained unique experience and practice in class activities or lives.

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Totally agree	3702	63.5%
Agree	643	11%
Not sure	421	7.2%
Disagree	195	3.3%
Totally disagree	771	13.2%

Note. During the investigated 5830 students, 98 students miss this question.

Banzhuren

From the survey, we can see that more than 80% of the students think their banzhuren prefer the work (see Figure 12). So, what do banzhuren think about their work? We can get some information from banzhuren questionnaires.

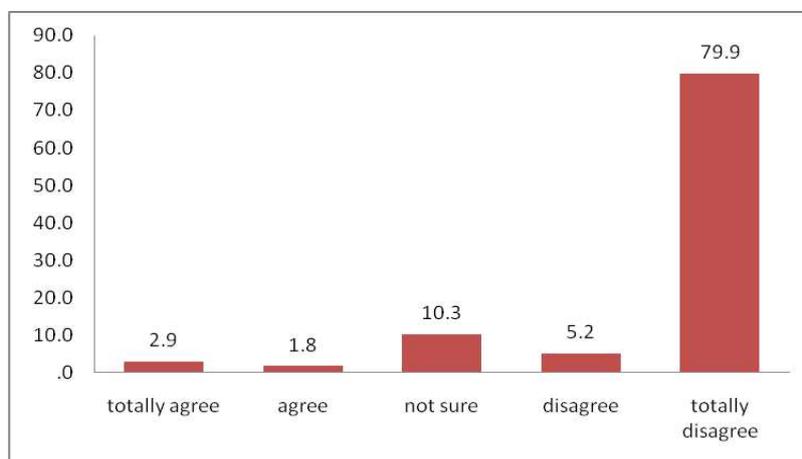


Figure 12. Our banzhuren hates to be a banzhuren. Figures are shown in percentage (N=5756)

Banzhuren think highly of their work too. Nearly 95.8% of the banzhuren admit that their work has made a positive influence on their subject teaching (see Figure 13). What's more, 88.8% of the banzhuren agree that classrooming is also beneficial to student development on thinking way, just like subject teaching (see Figure 14). It is good for banzhuren to realize the importance of their classrooming responsibility.

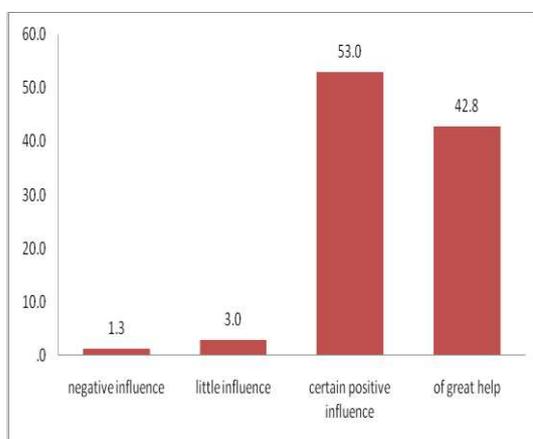


Figure 13. Influence of banzhuren work on my subject teaching. Figures are shown in percentage (N=542)

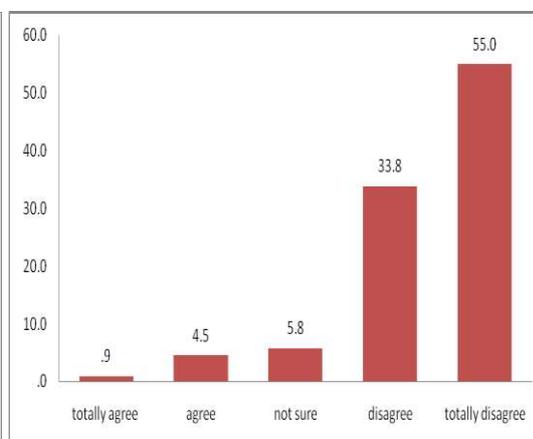


Figure 14. Compared with subject teaching, banzhuren work has little influence on students' thinking way. Figures are shown in percentage (N=535)

From the research, we see that the professional development of banzhuren is becoming very urgent. The skills of carrying out research on students, organizing or creating the educative materials and context, educating in everyday lives, and horizontal-connectedness are quite important for them (Li, Zhang & Gu, 2012; Yuan & Li, 2012). Just like parents, banzhurens influence the kids deeply, and must work with head, heart and hand; their jobs are closely related to their lives; and they create life meaning in the work (Fung, 1948; Ye, 2006).

New Directions

China needs to transform the culture from inside, with the long tradition of Chinese life mode, values and style, to be able to compete and collaborate in the global economy, to be an engaging, responsible and innovative member of the international community; and to conduct political, economical and educational reform. Such demands are becoming more urgent. In such a new context, the experiment of democracy in Chinese classroom still has more space to grow.

National Standards and Comprehensive Policies

By now, there are some policies encouraging the banzhuren to work better, and to be better paid for their heavy-burden work. Compared to instructors, the banzhuren's professionalism has not been well recognized, and not everyone recognizes their patience, warm-heartedness and work ethic. A professional support system is absent obviously.

Based on the recognition and respect of classrooming, a new national standard should be designed or researched in the near future, to pull, conduct and support the educators. Such standard should include:

- the nature of classrooming
- the aims of classrooming
- the contents of classrooming
- the methods and process of classrooming
- the professional support system of classrooming
- the qualities of the banzhuren
- the training and management of the banzhuren
- the assessment of classrooming and student development

This kind of professional support system can not only meet the demands of banzhuren and benefit to their development, but also help to promote the transformation of schools.

Education Research and the Theory of Classrooming

Chinese education researchers are doing more jobs and involving themselves more into the schooling reform since the reform and opening-up policy from 1978 for over thirty years. Unfortunately, most of them are in the area of curriculum and instruction, but very few in classrooming. Most of the banzhurens are just doing some action researches by themselves.

Classrooming is important with close relation to instruction, and can successfully contribute to the whole-person development. The authors and their colleagues are trying their best to develop the theories from within. Such theories can unquestionably enrich the education field, help more educators, and encourage more international collaboration. Some of the most important theoretical issues are: the theory of particularities of classrooming; the theory of the relationship between classrooming and democracy; the theory of value and aims of classrooming; the theory of content, method and process of classrooming; the theory of banzhuren as an educational subject; the theory of professional system for classrooming; etc. Such theories should be developed by professors and educators together to make the research full of sustainability, vigor and innovation.

Creative Practices and Networks

Banzhurens may be the largest amount of teachers in China, and every school treats them as very important members from the perspective of management. The principal always assigns banzhuren firstly and then other teachers for a classroom. Banzhuren is responsible for the development of all students and always ready to help other teachers in teaching and learning areas. However, there is no professional title for banzhuren, and most of teachers treat teaching as the most important profession. Even under such circumstances, Chinese banzhurens are creating many great educational moments in their classrooms.

Unfortunately, they always don't know each other very well. Because of the busy daily work, they have limited ways to communicate with colleagues, even in the same school. Some of the banzhurens have negative perceptions of their work, and pay more attention to the subject teaching which they think is more important than classrooming. And even worse, some of teachers treat banzhuren jobs to be part-time or temporary. Though Chinese teachers have more communication and dialogue, banzhurens are always excluded from such learning moments. More professional communities, in the school, district, nation or globe, should be set up, and such kind of learning network will make a great difference to today's schooling. As a result of more understanding of the creative work, and the professional support system to develop banzhuren's leadership, pedagogical wisdom, as well as improvement of their living sphere, banzhurens can work more positively and actively.

Global Communication and Collaboration

What has happened and is happening in Chinese classroom have great influence on Chinese educational practice, theory and policy, and can be learned in the global context of progressive education. With the development of global democracy, more experience and experiment are welcomed by the world.

But on the other hand, compared with the areas of curriculum, leadership or PLC, this area has little dialogue with western countries, which has decreased the quality of multicultural understanding and learning, though it is full of potential. Even for Dewey, visiting China also "gave him the opportunity to cast aside the institutional baggage of Western democracy and to emphasize the idea of community life as a more secure foundation for democracy" (Wang, 2007, p. 11). Therefore, we need to free ourselves and learn from each other globally, and more communication and collaboration are greatly needed today.

Classrooming is powerful for democracy, and the students living democratically in the classroom will lead to a new future of Chinese society. As an educator, Chinese banzhuren is responsible for affording rich activities and communal relationships to students, and awaking their self-awareness. What Chinese banzhurens are doing now can renew our understanding of democracy and education, and make Chinese schooling into new state:

holistic, professional, and humanistic. The future of democracy in China is in the hands, heads and hearts of banzhurens.

References

- Dewey, J. (1916/1944). *Democracy and Education*. New York: The Free Press.
- Dewey, J. (1940). *Education Today*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Dewey, J. (1938/1963). *Experience and Education*. New York: Collier Books.
- Dewey, J. (1959). *The Child and the Curriculum* and *The School and Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Durnan, V. (2013). *Dateline Shanghai, March 7, 2013*. Availability:
<http://www.usn.org/podium/default.aspx?t=204&tn=Dateline+Shanghai%2C+March+7%2C+2013&nid=658158&ptid=131735&sdb=False&pf=pgt&mode=0&vcm=False>. 2013.
- Fung, Y. (1948). *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*. New York: Macmillan.
- Jackson, P. (1990). *Life in Classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Jackson, P. (1992). *Untaught Lessons*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Jackson, P.; Boostrom, R. & Hansen, D. (1998). *The Moral Life of Schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Li, J. (2010). Banzhuren as the Key of Teachers' Team: Thoughts on Developing of Teachers' Team from the Standpoint of Students. *Journal of Educational Research and Experiment*. (5), 12-16.
- Li, J.; Zhang, J. & Gu, H. (2012). Pursuing Integration of Classrooming and Instruction: Based on the Teachers' Standpoint. *Journal of Educational Development*. (4):10-14.
- Liu, H. (2011). MOE is Conducting Research on Large Class Size. *China Education Daily*. 2011-8-5-1.
- Yuan, W.; Li, J. (2012). Understanding and Practice of Students Position. *Class Adviser (High School Edition)*. (5):33-37.
- Noddings, N. (2005). *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education* (second edition), New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wang, J. (2007). *John Dewey in China: To Teach and to Learn*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Ye, L. (2006). *On 'New Basic Education'*. Beijing: Educational Science Publishing House.