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# Higher Education for Jobs? Challenging the Paradigm

**Kai-ming Cheng**  
University of Hong Kong

CHEA  
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Washington DC



Basic question:

Do we know  
what we are doing?





# The Changing Higher Education Landscape

# The Changing Global Landscape



## 1. Rebuilding the system

- ◇ Expansion of access
- ◇ Creating tiers and diversity of institutions
- ◇ Establishing elite institutions

# The Changing Global Landscape ...



- ◆ Re-positioning the private sector
  - ◆ Re-positioning the private institutions
  - ◆ Facilitating public-private partnership
  - ◆ Fostering a philanthropic culture

# The Changing Global Landscape ...



- ◆ Redefining student learning
  - ◆ Restructuring the curriculum
  - ◆ Reforming the pedagogy
  - ◆ Widening student experiences

# The Changing Global Landscape ...



- ◆ Internationalizing higher education
  - ◆ Globalizing the institutions
  - ◆ Cross-border undertaking (WTO)
  - ◆ Competing in the international arena (Ranking)





It used to be ...

Organization

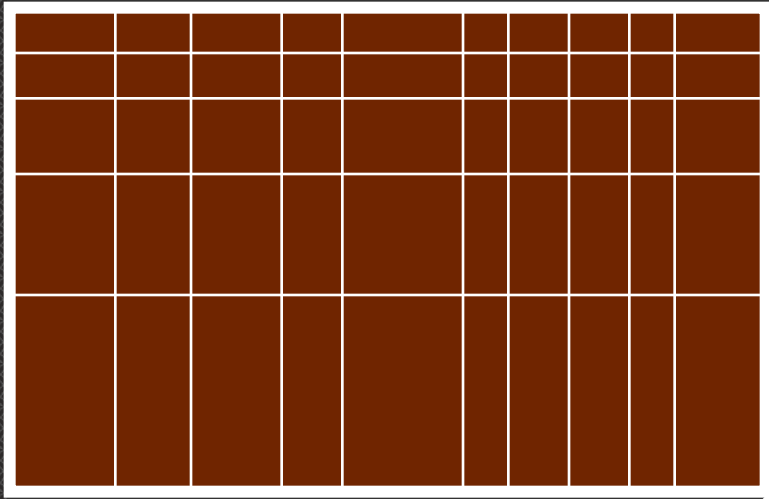
Society

Knowledge

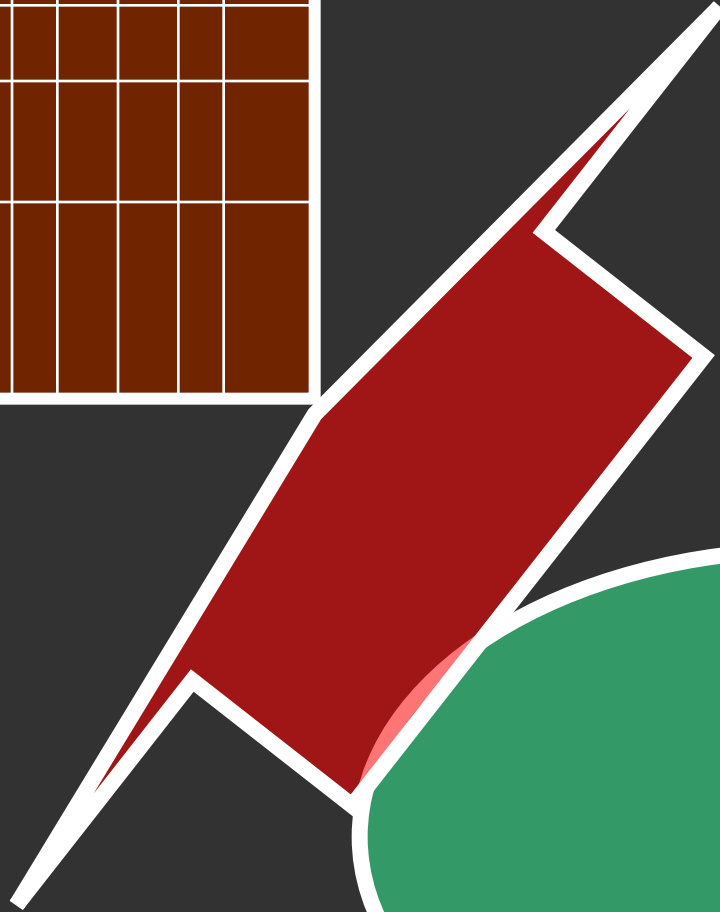
Credentials



Manpower



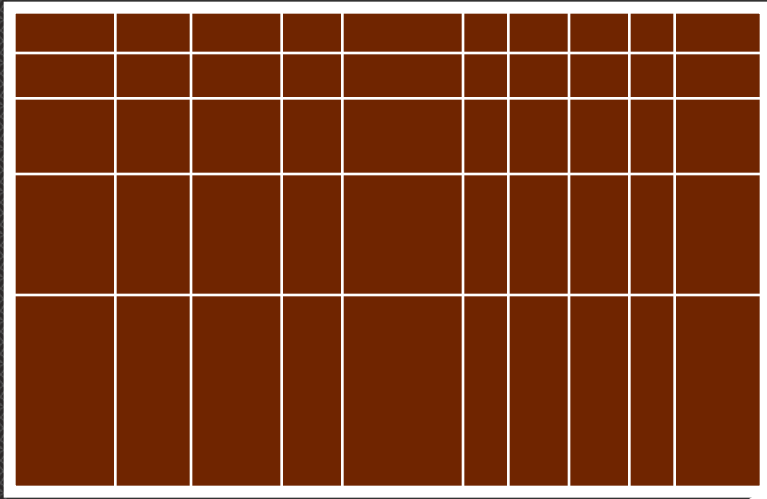
Education



Young People



Manpower



Education

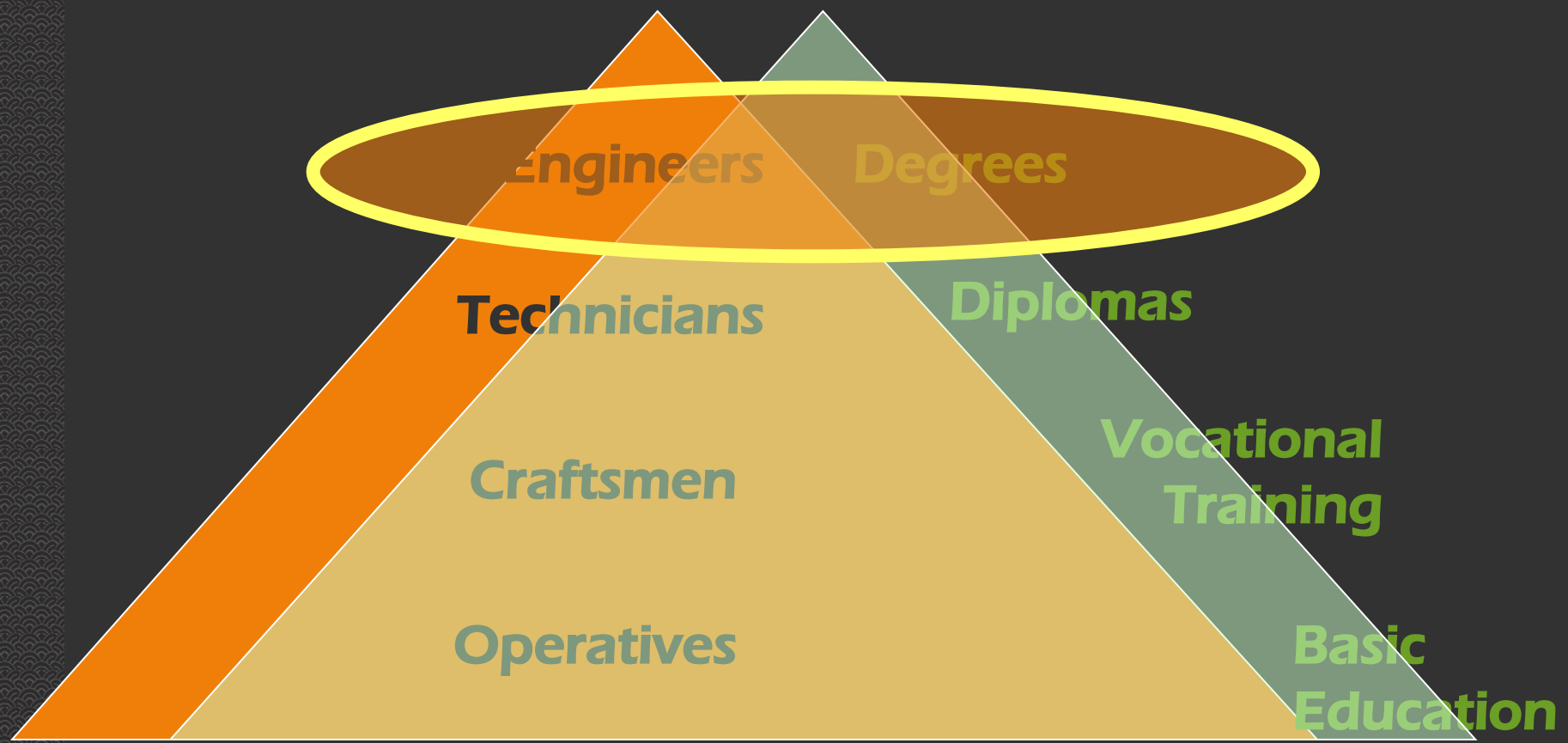
- >> Examinations
- >> Syllabuses
- >> Textbooks
- >> Schools
- >> Classes
- >> Timetable
- >> .....

Young People





# Industrial Institutions



# Wellington College 1976



Those who  
succeeded



Professor Chi Chee Ming

Lam Woon Kwong

Those who  
“failed” ...







Society has changed!

And is still changing, very fast.

But how?



# Hong Kong ...

Around 304,000 registered companies (2008)

- ◆ 99.3% under 100 (SME)
  - ◆ 69% of employees
- ◆ 94.3% under 20
  - ◆ 40% of employees
- ◆ 87.0% under 10
  - ◆ 33% of employees
- ◆ Over 1,000 employees: 110
- ◆ Free-lancers 220,000 *estimated*  
vis-à-vis 2,200,000 in registered companies

## Shanghai (2005/6)

- **SME: 99.7%**
- **Employees: 86.8%**
- **Total asset: 69.2%**

*Research, 2002*



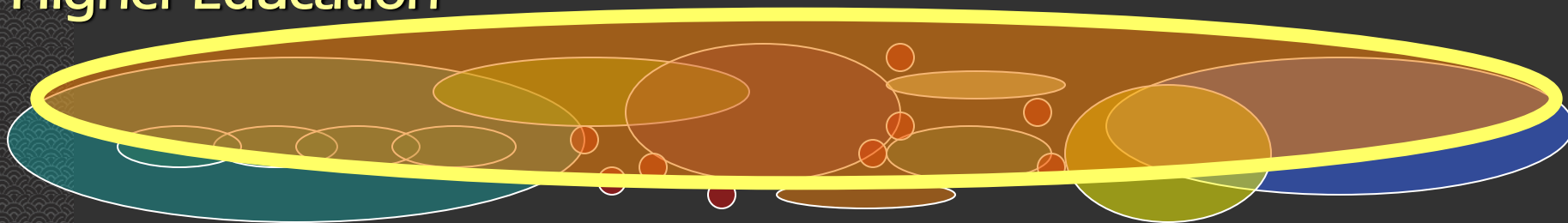
# Post-industrial: Workplace

Project Groups/Task Forces

Small Enterprises

Free-lancers

Higher Education





I

How long do credentials last?

# But now ...

## Department Heads in Department Stores

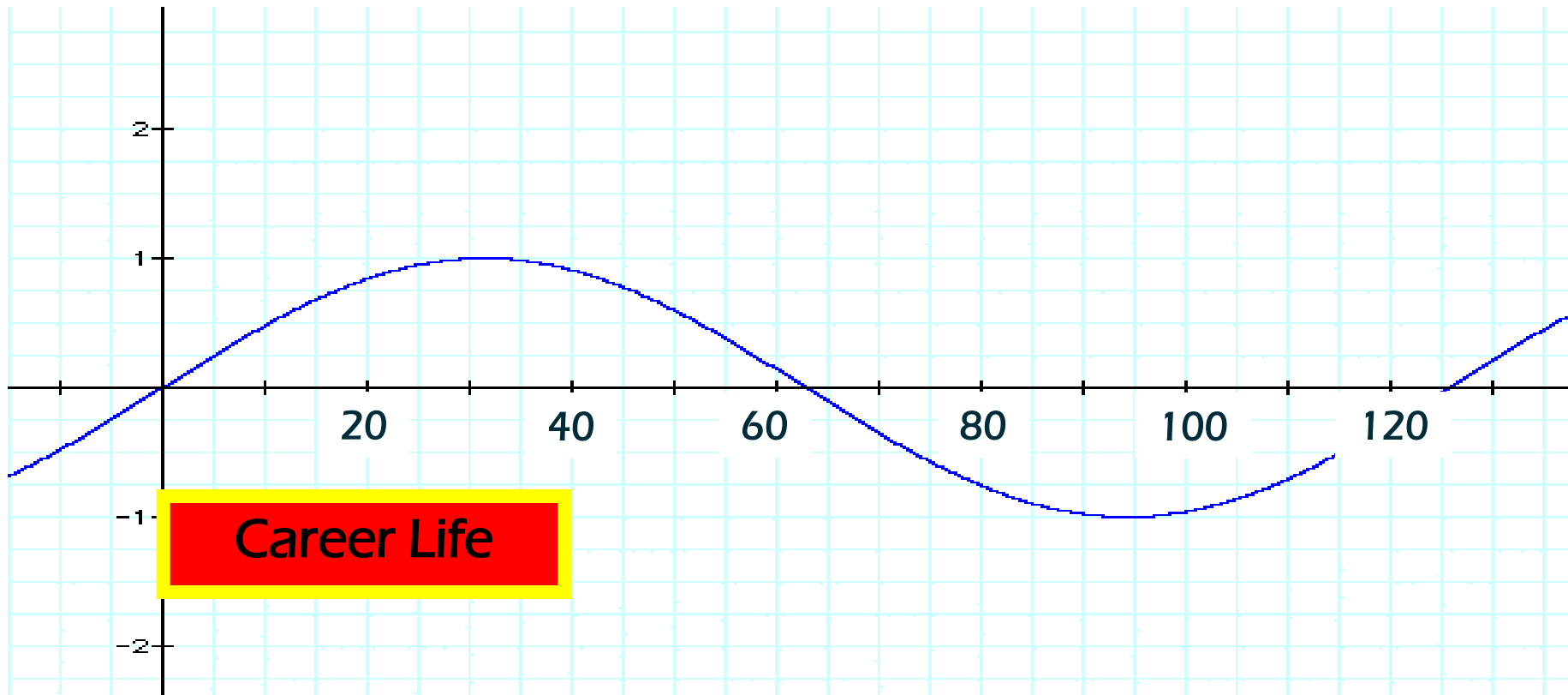
Secondary school graduates

- 1970s: stable and comfortable
- 1980s: re-engineering, second tier shops
- 1990s: shops in malls
- Late 1990s: domestic helpers



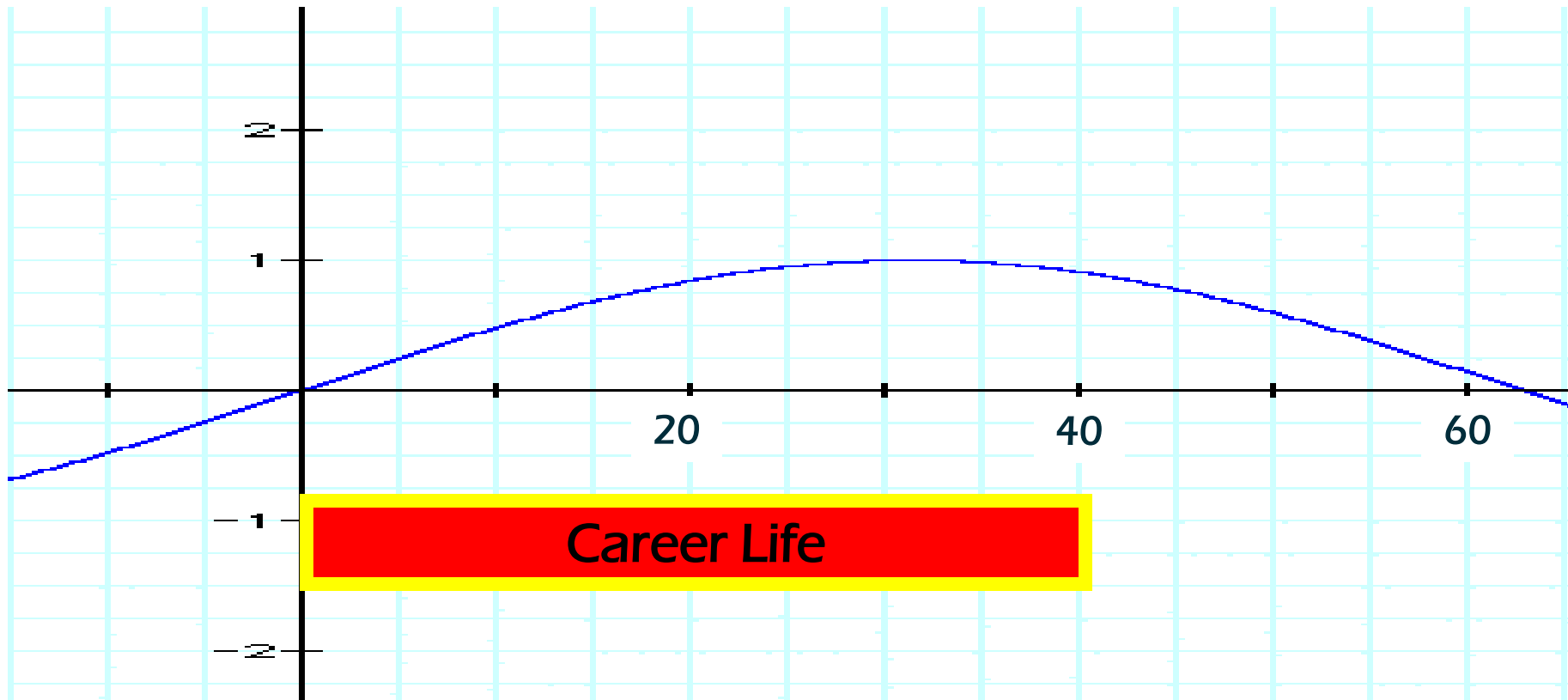
It used to be ...

## Cycle of societal changes

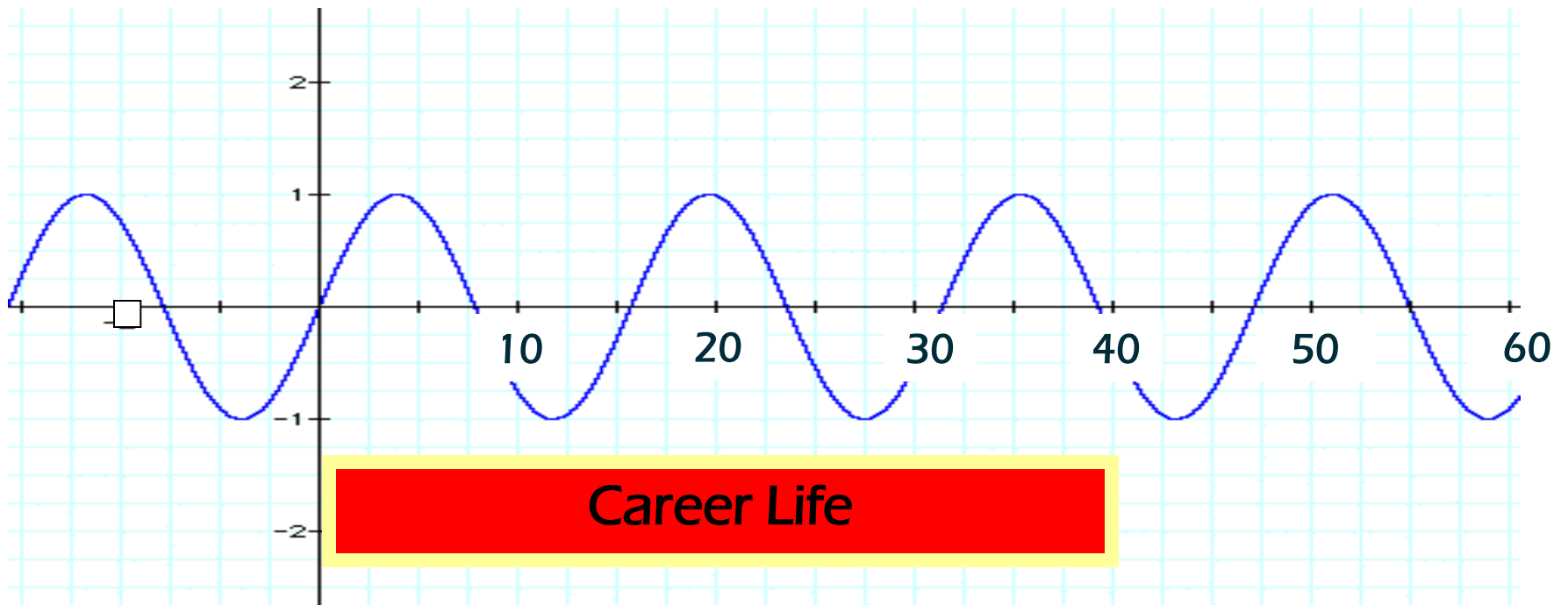


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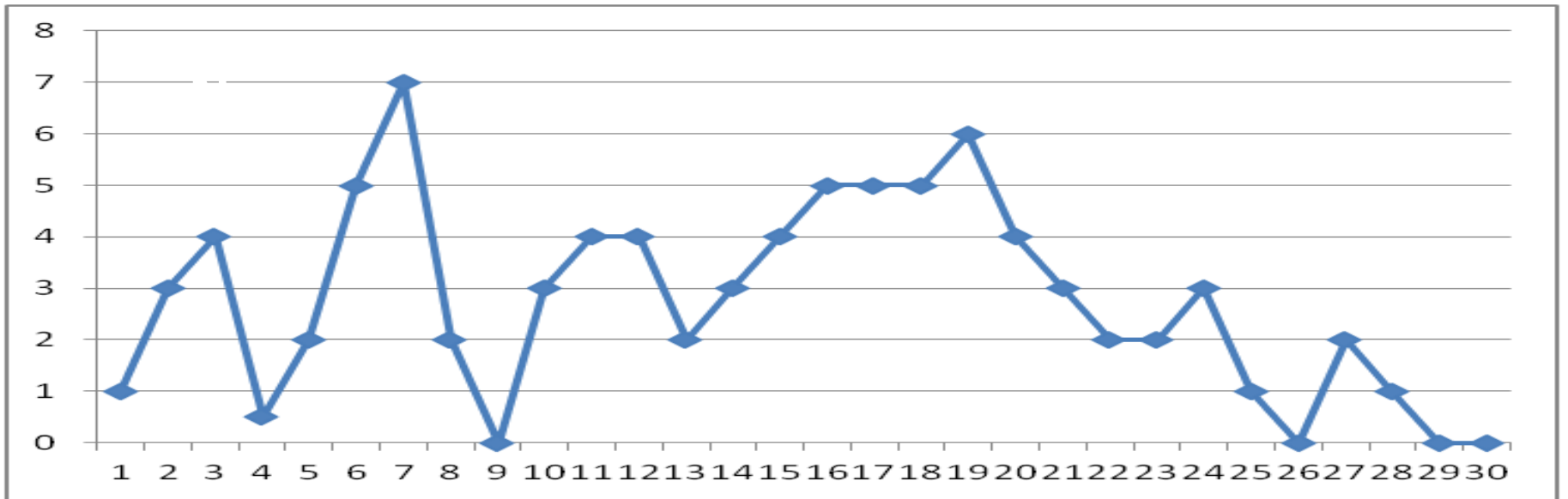
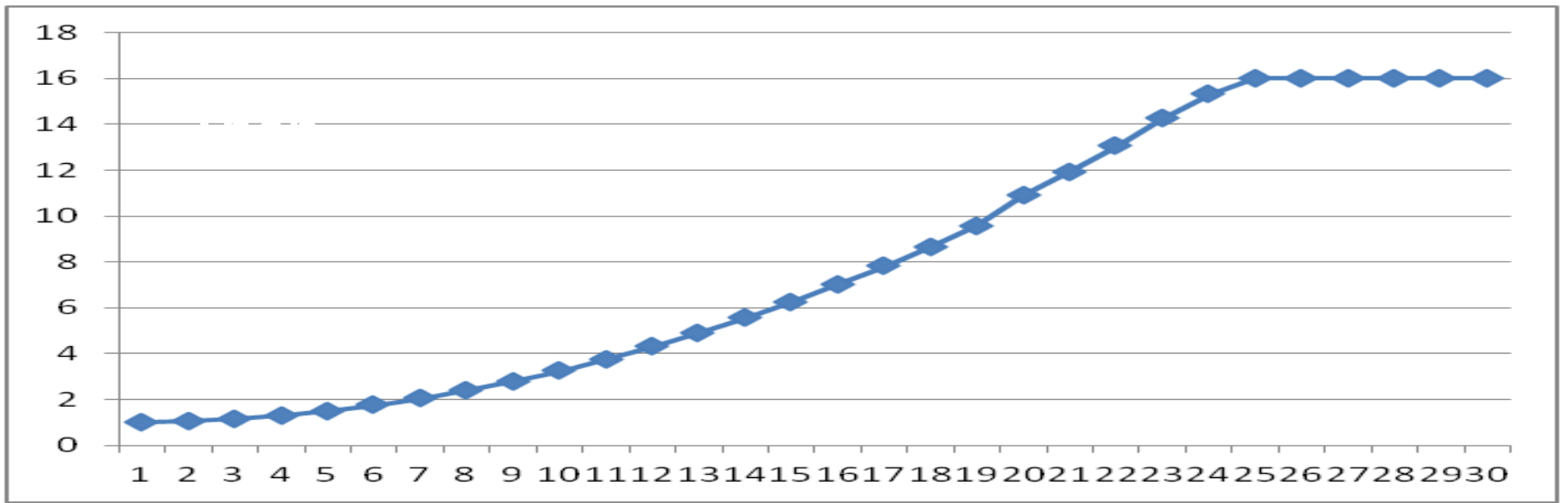
## Cycle of societal changes



Now ...









## Observation of Change I

Credentials do not last long!

Learning has to go beyond credentials!

Hence,

**Learning to Learn?**



## II

Study for the Job?

# Mismatch

## University Graduates

- ◆ Medicine: 1%
- ◆ Law: 15-20%
- ◆ Engineering: 35%
- ◆ Arts & Social Sciences varied



# Mismatch



## ◆ Imperial College

Year	1	2	3	4
Aspiring to be an engineer (%)	81	74	49	44

# Mismatch



## Accountants

- ◆ Mismatch
  - ◆ Physics, Psychology PhD, Computer Science PhD
- ◆ Morgan Stanley
  - ◆ “Winning Personality”
- ◆ Senior Partner Deloitte
  - ◆ “Integrity and sensitivity”
- ◆ KPMG
  - ◆ More non-accounting graduates
- ◆ Society of Accountants
  - ◆ “Don’t teach!”

# Career changes



## ◆ John

- ◆ BScEng (1971)
- ◆ Graduated in Electrical Engineering
- ◆ Appointed to the Department of Electrical Engineering
- ◆ Promoted to a very senior position
- ◆ Stayed in the Department until 55
- ◆ Enjoying early retirement

# Career changes



## ◆ Shirley

◆ BA (1987)

◆ 87-92 Teaching

◆ 92-95 Publishing

◆ 95-02 Newspaper Editor

◆ 02-05 Corporate Communications

◆ 05- Consultancy Firm



# Career changes



## ◆ Nancy

◆ BA (Economics) 2002

◆ 2000-2 MPhil (Psychology)

+ Free Lance Photographer

◆ 2002-4 Free Lance Photo Organizer + PT Tutor

◆ 2004-5 Manager (Fashion Design)

◆ 2005 Administrative Officer (6 months)

◆ 2005- Financial Planner

+ NGO China Rural Education



- ◆ Angelina (2012)
  - ◆ Ballet performer
  - ◆ Ballet teacher
  - ◆ Real Estate Investor
  - ◆ Free-lance designer
  - ◆ NGO on female issues



## Change of jobs:

- ◆ UK (City and Guild, 2006):
  - ◆ 13 jobs/life
- ◆ US (DOL)
  - ◆ 10.6 jobs/life (2006)
  - ◆ 4.3 occupations/life (2002)



## Jobs?

- ◆ Jobs are declining in number!
- ◆ Traditional jobs are disappearing!
- ◆ Free-lancing & self-employment are on the rise!
- ◆ Jobs are changing in nature!

## Observation of Change II

Study-occupation mismatch and job-changes  
are commonplace!

Ability counts more than stock of information!

Hence,

**Reforms in Curriculum!**

**Reforms in Pedagogy!**

**Reforms in Assessments!**

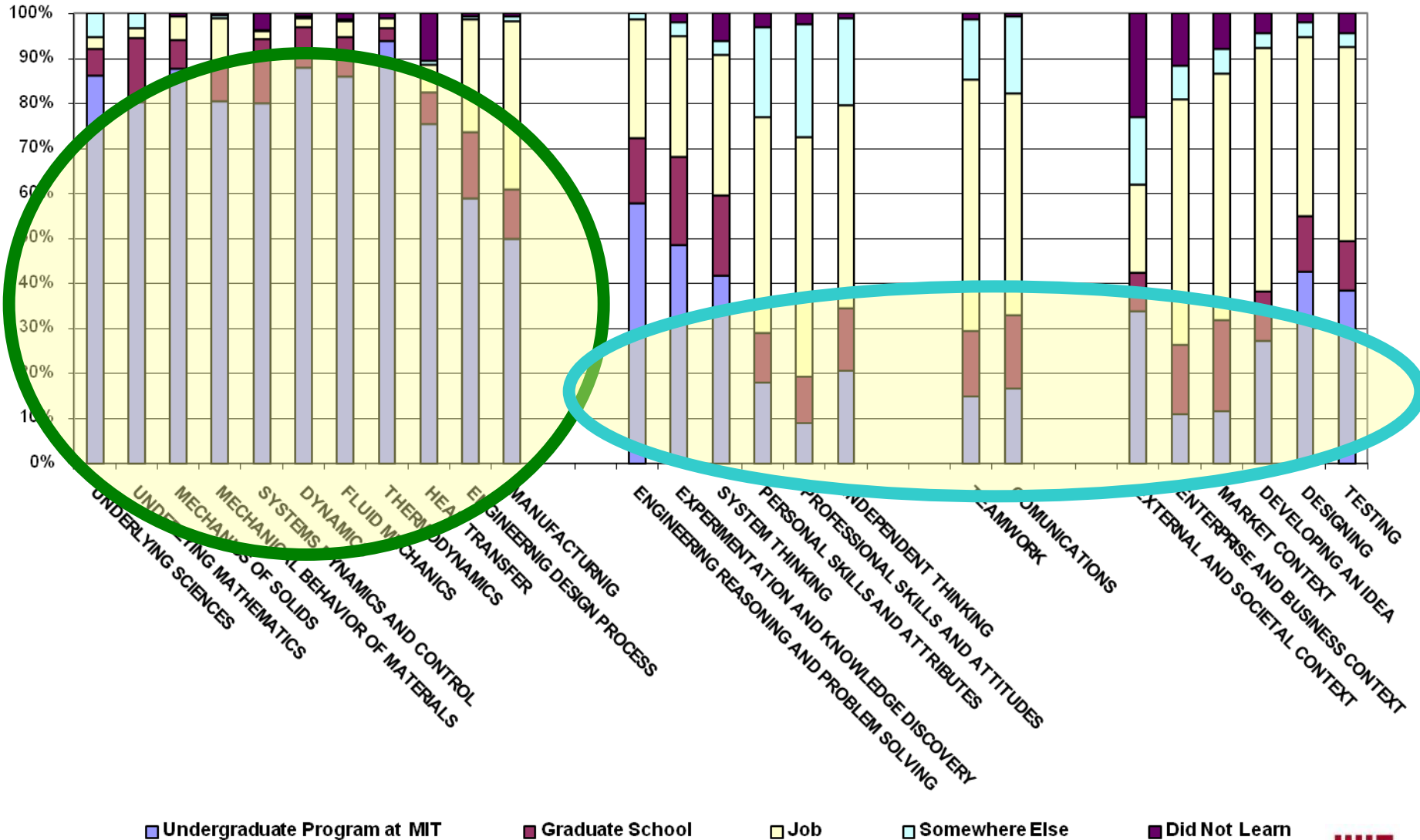




# III

Education for Knowledge and Skills?

# Source of Knowledge and Skills – MIT Alumni

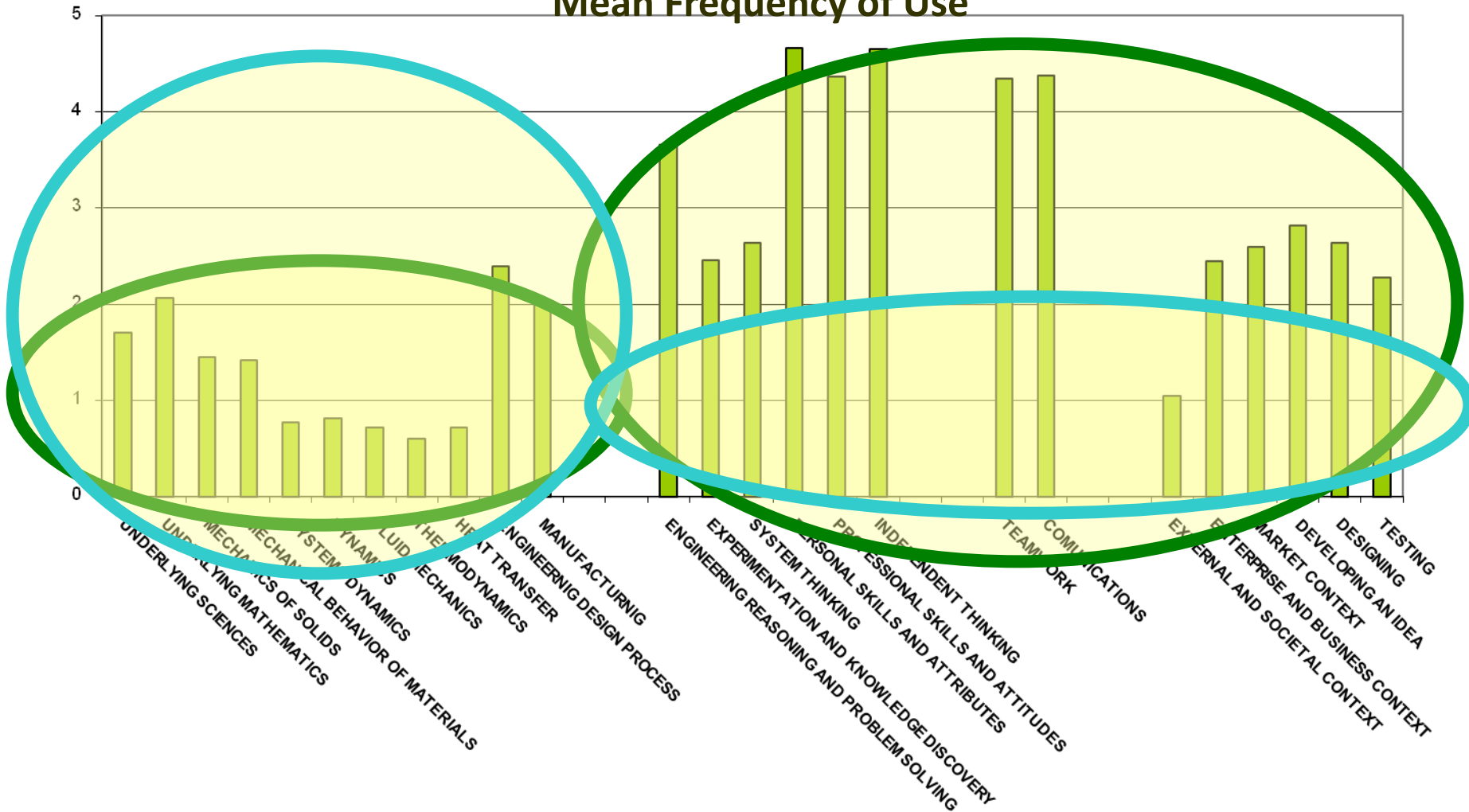


Source: Kristen Wolfe, B.S. Thesis, Department of Mechanical Engineering, June 2004



# Knowledge and Skills – MIT Alumni

## Mean Frequency of Use



Frequency of Use: 0 Never, 1 Hardly ever - a few times a year, 2 Occasionally - at least once a month, 3 Regularly - at least weekly, 4 Frequently - on most days, 5 Pervasively - for most everything I do

Source: Kristen Wolfe, B.S. Thesis, Department of Mechanical Engineering, June 2004







◆ Same credentials, differential salaries  
(Top salary/Bottom salary)

◆ Investment banking	13+
◆ Retail banking	5.5
◆ Computer related	4.5
◆ Marketing	4
◆ Social Work	2

(Kan 2009, Data from two universities in Hong Kong)

# Task Forces, Deal Teams, Project Groups, ...



One-stop  
Team

Promote  
or perish

Blurred  
layers

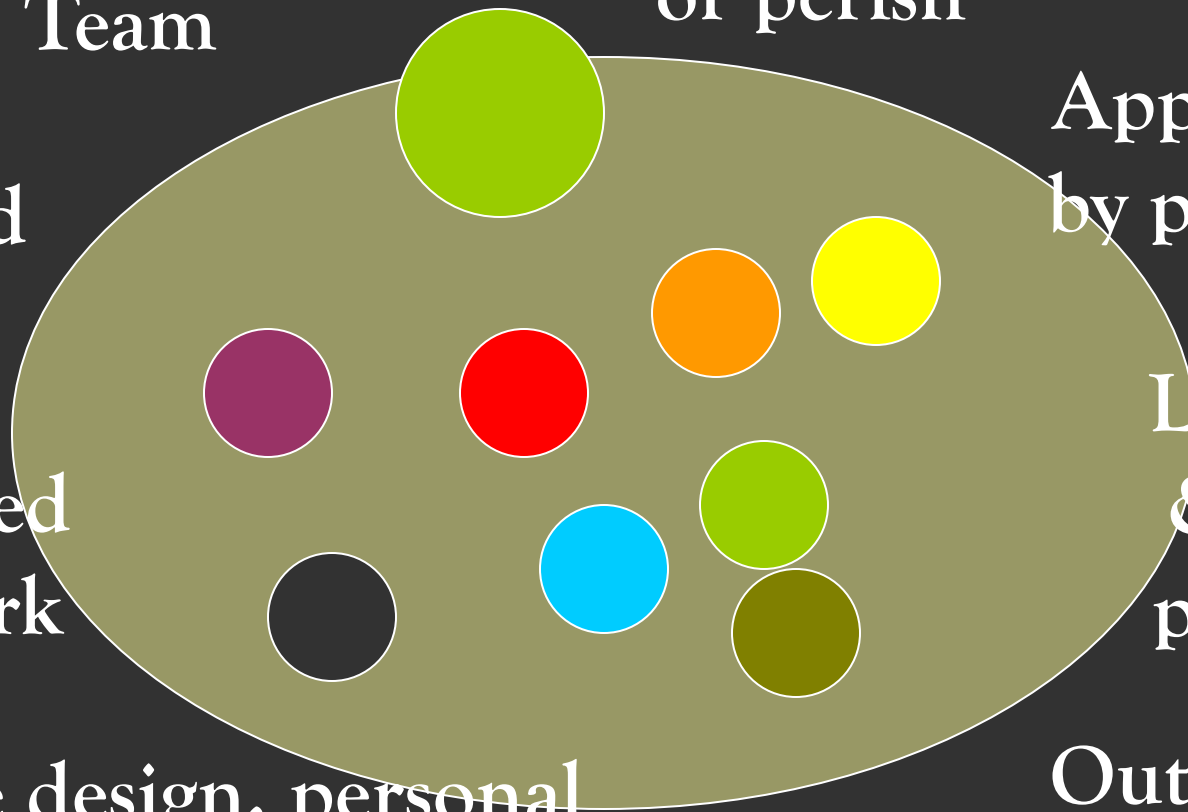
Appointment  
by personality

Integrated  
teamwork

Loose rules  
& flexible  
procedures

Frontline design, personal  
responsibility

Output rather  
than process



# Expectations on individuals ...



# Beyond “Jobs”

- ◆ Work units are getting smaller and looser
- ◆ Front-line responsibilities are getting more complex
- ◆ More people do not work in organizations
- ◆ More people are between jobs
- ◆ More people retire early



# The Larger Context



## The workplace:

- ◆ Products/services:
  - Customized or Personalized
- ◆ Production:
  - “Less of More”, Variety replacing Quantity
- ◆ Organizations:
  - smaller, flatter and looser
- ◆ Working modes:
  - intensive human interactions

# The Larger Context



## Individuals:

- ◆ Changing jobs and careers
- ◆ Diluted organizational loyalty
- ◆ Diminishing occupational identity
- ◆ Increasing number of free-lancers
- ◆ More people work at home
- ◆ Possible multiple portfolios



## Observation of Change III

What is expected is well beyond  
what the curriculum provides.

Hence,

Broader learning experiences!

**Learning beyond classrooms, campuses, ...**

**Learning beyond family and culture, ...**



Society has changed!

In sum, ..



# Organisations



## Industrial

- ◆ Large pyramids
- ◆ Producer-centred
- ◆ Departments
- ◆ Hierarchy
- ◆ Tight structure
- ◆ Design at the top
- ◆ Assigned procedures
- ◆ Rules & regulations

## Post-industrial

- ◆ Small companies
- ◆ Client-centred
- ◆ Project teams
- ◆ Flat
- ◆ Loose & fluid
- ◆ Design at front-lines
- ◆ Improvised actions
- ◆ Fit-for-purpose acts

# Working Modes



## Industrial

- ◆ Division of labour
- ◆ Individual tasks
- ◆ Specialist duties
- ◆ Administrative links
- ◆ Credential-based appointments
- ◆ Appraisal by seniors

## Post-industrial

- ◆ Total solutions
- ◆ Team work
- ◆ Integrated expertise
- ◆ Human interactions
- ◆ On-demand, just-in-time learning
- ◆ 360<sup>0</sup> appraisal

# Work Activities

## Industrial

- ◆ Paper work
- ◆ Circulars
- ◆ Minutes
- ◆ Documents
- ◆ Instructions
- ◆ Written reports
- ◆ .....

## Post-industrial

- ◆ Communications
- ◆ Brainstorming
- ◆ E-mailing
- ◆ Seminars
- ◆ Debates
- ◆ Conferencing
- ◆ Negotiation
- ◆ Presentation
- ◆ Confrontation
- ◆ Lobbying
- ◆ Retreats
- ◆ SMS
- ◆ Blogs
- ◆ Facebook
- ◆ You-tubes



# Front-line workers

## Industrial

- ◆ Bottom of the hierarchy
- ◆ Hiring due to credentials
- ◆ Member of a specialised department
- ◆ Implementation of design
- ◆ Using specific skills
- ◆ Routine and repetitive activities
- ◆ Working according to job descriptions
- ◆ Following set procedures
- ◆ Maintaining the convention
- ◆ Abiding by rules and regulations
- ◆ Appraised by degree of compliance
- ◆ Stable and secure
- ◆ Blue collars

## Post-industrial

- ◆ Member of a small group
- ◆ Hiring due to personality
- ◆ Working in teams
- ◆ Directly facing clients
- ◆ Handling human relations
- ◆ Directly facing problems
- ◆ Anticipating total solutions
- ◆ Designing solutions with creativity
- ◆ Using multiple skills
- ◆ Taking risks
- ◆ Improvising fit-for-purpose activities
- ◆ Managing oneself
- ◆ Learning on-the-job, on-demand, just-in-time
- ◆ Appraised 360<sup>0</sup>
- ◆ Unstable, uncertain and insecure
- ◆ **Knowledge workers**



# Individual Lives



## Industrial

- ◆ Lifelong career
- ◆ Long-term loyalty
- ◆ Occupational identity
- ◆ Work-study consistency
- ◆ Org membership
- ◆ Stable employment
- ◆ Escalating salaries
- ◆ Upward mobility
- ◆ Foreseeable retirement
- ◆ Constant networks
- ◆ Stable relations
- ◆ Security, certainty

## Post-industrial

- ◆ Multiple careers
- ◆ Multiple jobs
- ◆ Blurred identity
- ◆ Work-study mismatch
- ◆ Possible free-lancing
- ◆ Frequent off-jobs
- ◆ Precarious incomes
- ◆ Fluctuating status
- ◆ Unpredictable future
- ◆ Varying networks
- ◆ Changing partners
- ◆ Insecurity, uncertainty



Moreover, ...

# Beyond Skills



- ◆ Moral Standards
  - ◆ Attitudes
  - ◆ Emotions
  - ◆ Values
  - ◆ Ethics
- ◆ Personality
  - ◆ .....

All in the affective domain!

# Beyond economic lives ...



There are lives beyond jobs or economic lives.

- ◆ Family lives?
- ◆ Cultural lives?
- ◆ Political lives?
- ◆ Spiritual lives?
- ◆ Leisure lives?
- ◆ Lives after retirement?
- ◆ ....



# More recently, ...



- ◆ Preparation for Disruptions in Life
  - ◆ Unpredictable natural disasters
  - ◆ Man-made accidents
  - ◆ Emerging disease and recurring epidemics
  - ◆ Precarious economic crises
  - ◆ Unexpected political turmoil
  - ◆ Irresponsible politicking
  - ◆ Hidden potentials of wars
  - ◆ Intolerable social inequality and conflicts



After all, ...



## Industrial Era: Economic Discourse

- ◆ Education, as systems, started mid-19<sup>th</sup> century
- ◆ It was at the high time of industrial society
- ◆ Individuals work in specific jobs in bureaucracies
- ◆ They are protected by instructions, procedures, rules and regulations
- ◆ Education prepare individuals for the system
- ◆ Education system per se models after industry



## Post-industrial Era: Humanity Discourse

- ◆ Individuals are gradually freed from bureaucracy
- ◆ Expected to constantly face new challenges
- ◆ No longer protected by the organization
- ◆ Have to face moral and ethical dilemmas
- ◆ Have to live beyond economic lives
- ◆ Education has the function of emancipation

# After all ...



## Industrial

- ◆ analytic, regulated, structured, clear-cut, uniform, convergent, normative, neat, assertive and reducible to parameters

## Post-industrial

- ◆ holistic, flexible, loose, fuzzy, plural, divergent, liberal, complex, speculative and tolerant of multiplex concepts



Thank you!

[kmcheng@hku.hk](mailto:kmcheng@hku.hk)