



## ECDA Fellows' Inquiry-Based Action Plan (IBAP) Designing a Character-based Curriculum via Service Learning Framework

Ang-Oh Chui Hwa, Principal of Far Eastern Kindergarten  
Ms Ava Wang, Senior Quality Specialist, My First Skool



# Start Small Dream Big

PRESIDENT'S  
CHALLENGE  
2015



PRESIDENT'S  
CHALLENGE 2015  
We Care

Celebrating  
15 years of  
giving &  
caring



Early Childhood  
Development Agency



*"To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society."*

Theodore Roosevelt

*"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all."*

Aristotle



Service-learning is a pedagogy that is “grounded in experience as a basis for learning and on the centrality and intentionality of reflection designed to enable learning to occur. It is based on the work of researchers and theorists on learning, including John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin, Donald Schon, and David Kolb, who believe that we learn through combinations of action and reflection”

(Jacoby, 2003, p. 4).



# SSDB is a Dream come true when children can Learn as they Serve

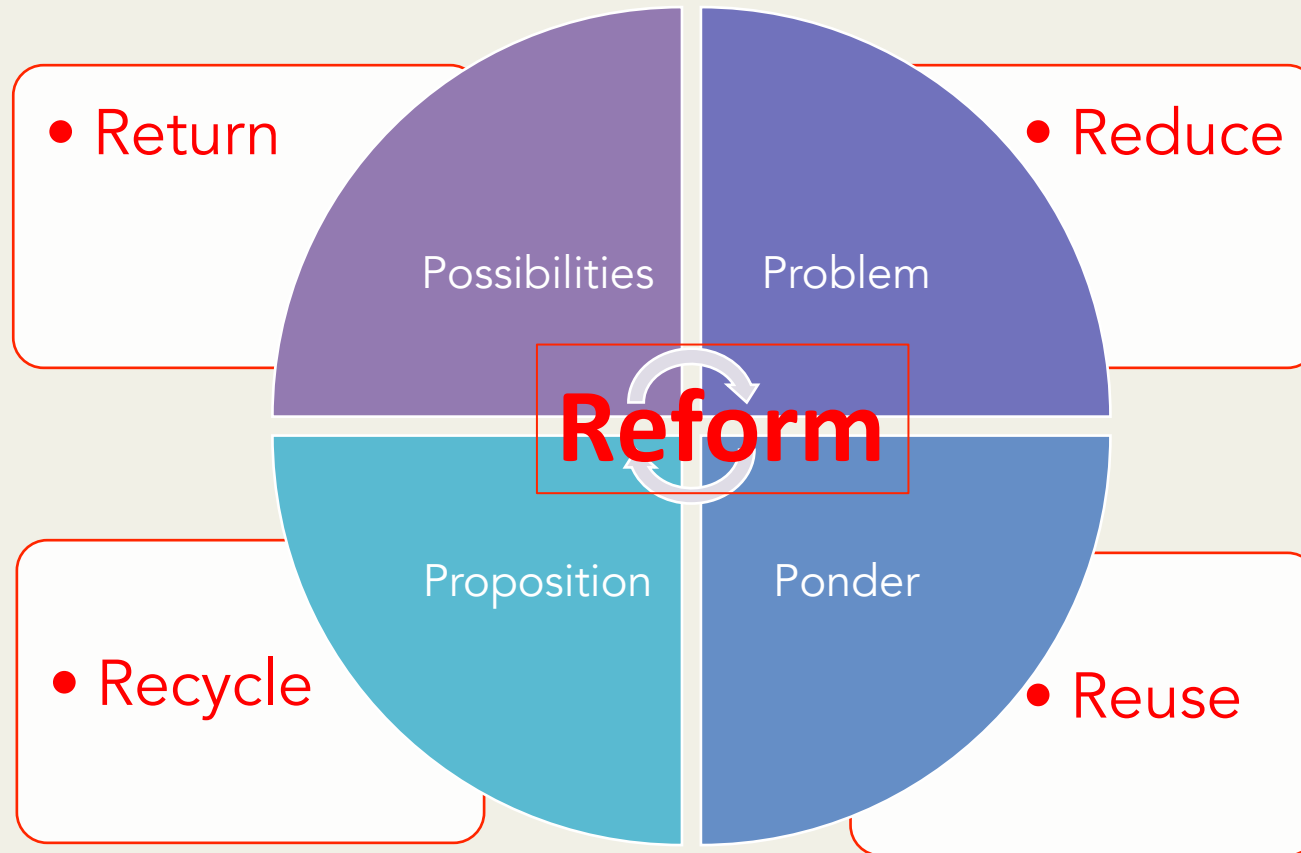


- Service Learning projects (SLP) should develop children's character in fun and meaningful ways.
- Empower teachers to incorporate SLP as part of school curriculum or holiday programme (Childcare Centres)



Service Learning must be **AUTHENTIC**. It must be part of your belief system. It must be part of your everyday living. It must be natural. It must be your school culture. Above all, the teachers must own it – they must **LOVE** the ideas. The SLP must be meaningful and relevant to the children's learning. It must evoke a positive change in children's character.

# Service Learning Model



# 2016 to 2019 Findings

| Year & Batch     | Delivery Format                                      | Number of Participants | Achieved 75% & Above Attendance | Confidence in Conducting Service Learning |
|------------------|--|------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 2016 (1 Batch)   | 1 day Workshop + 3 NLCs (Network Learning Community) | 9                      | 7                               | N.A.                                      |
| 2017 (2 Batches) | 1 day Workshop + 2 NLCs                              | 34                     | 34                              | 75%                                       |
| 2018 (2 Batches) | 1 day Workshop + 1 NLC & Coaching/Online community   | 60                     | 55                              | 98%                                       |
| 2019 (2 Batches) | As above   | 63                     | 60                              | 100%                                      |



# The small picture is the BIG PICTURE

Alvin Pang (Singaporean Poet)



## Sample Qualitative Data – Identified Themes

### Motivation/Inspiration:

- The sharing sessions with other participants are very effective and meaningful as we are able to learn and exchange ideas to improve on the projects for SSDB.
- They provided us with lots of ideas on how to do service learning. They were very friendly and knowledgeable. Approachable and always ready to advise us.
- I like that this is a very real training and not one that has all the politically correct answers.
- There's a network where I can share and seek help as I am not alone.
- I hear fabulous ideas from other centres which is inspiring. It is also encouraging to know of others who have faced similar issues and have succeeded eventually. It's also a good platform for sharing resources.
- It empowers me.

### Best Practices/Strategies/Theory to Practice:

- A clear understanding and better planning of SSDB project
- Learning how to incorporate service learning into my centre curriculum.
- I learned different projects, practices from other leaders in different organisation.
- I learnt to develop stronger leadership, collaboration and communication skills.
- The specific explanation given during the feedback has helped me to understand the importance of focussing on Character Education - embedding it into the curriculum.
- Through reflections and questions asked, I am able to better come up with time line and reflect on other things that can be done with the children and to think out of the box.
- I personally feel that the Service Learning Model helps us to put our ideas on paper and how we can relate it to our team
- The Service Learning Model helped me to systemically design a character-based curriculum project to integrate into our programme.

## Resources:

- Engaging community partners to develop character in children alongside with parents; ensuring the sustainability of the project.
- We can share our ideas and receive suggestions/feedback from one another.
- It provided a platform for rich exchange of ideas.
- The generation of ideas from a large group of like-minded individuals will certainly be more than can be generated by a single person alone.
- Collaboration with other centres
- It gives me more ideas and how other principals introduce and carry out Service Learning.
- Exchange ideas and resources at the finger tips.
- We can seek the community for more ideas and suggestions and even problem solve and brainstorm for solutions.
- Networking enhances the quality of my centre's curriculum.

# Why do you need this IBAP?

“When we think about the kind of character we want for our children, it’s clear that we want them to be able to judge what is right, care deeply about what is right, and then do what they believe to be right – even in the face of pressure from without and temptation from within.”

Dr Thomas Lickona

Based on the data generated from about 166 participants of the Building ECCE Leaders’ Capacity in designing a Character-based Curriculum project, it is observed that these preschool leaders were positive towards the Service Learning Model as a framework to teach Character Education.

Most of these leaders just needed to be inspired and affirmed in order to adopt a new approach. The general principles and the Framework help them to be more intentional in their curriculum design. The co-construction of a Service Learning Project process was useful and provided an inspiring platform for leaders to network and share their ideas.





# Usefulness of the model to concretise Service Learning

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| 2018 Batch 4 | 69% |
| 2018 Batch 5 | 73% |
| 2019 Batch 6 | 75% |

| Year | Project Emphasis  |
|------|---|
| 2016 | Parenting for Character: Epstein's framework of 6 types of Parental Involvement |
| 2017 | Designing a Character-based Curriculum via Service Learning                     |
| 2018 | Co-construct a localised Service Learning Module                                |
| 2019 | Service Learning as a Culture   |
| 2020 | Sustaining the Service Learning Culture   |



“Effective character education is not adding a programme or set of programmes to a school. Rather it is a transformation of the culture and life of the school.”

Dr Marvin Berkowitz