

Project Emgrasion

07-18

Multi-Year Project

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Area of Concern

As Singapore faces more challenges in the coming years and good relationships with others are crucial to ensuring one's success in the future, it is now more important than ever that the youth of today are ready and equipped with the skills required to have good relations with others and to do well in life. However, a problem that we have identified is that there is an increasing lack of Empathy, Gratitude, Respect and Compassion amongst Singaporean youths today.

According to Professors Tikki Pangestu and Maria Loh of Lee Kuan Yew school of Public Policy, "Simple Courtesy is still lacking in Singapore", with them noting that many Singaporeans have forgotten basic manners and that "a return to civility, kindness, humility and courtesy would go a long way in making Singapore a better place".

According to a world Vision poll done in 2015 showed that most Youth in Singapore are empathetic but **3 in 4 rarely do something to help**. In the poll done, **less than 10%** of respondent agreed that they were surrounded by people who display empathy. We can see that Singaporeans rarely act upon the values of Empathy and Compassion in today's society and that lesser youth feel that these values are important for them and thus do less to help others out.

As such, we have zeroed in on the increasing lack of 4 core values in today's youth (Empathy, Gratitude, Respect and Compassion) which is amplified by the lack of exposure and leadership training skills for the young student leaders of today.

Underlying Problem

Given that lack of exposure and adequate leadership training skills has led to increasing lack of empathy, gratitude and respect amongst the youth of today, how can we fix the issue through interaction sessions teaching moral values and leadership skills thereby making them better citizens of tomorrow?

Plan of Action

In order to better allow Singaporean youth to adopt good character values, we have observed that having interaction sessions with normal students would not be as effective in bringing about change in the younger population. Therefore, being the future leaders of our nation while having a larger influence on other students around them, we concluded that working with student leaders as our target audience would allow more to benefit and be positively influenced by these student leaders in the present and the future.

As such, we decided to work with student leaders of both Greenridge Primary School and Bukit Panjang Primary School to inculcate the values of Empathy, Gratitude, Respect and Compassion through the use of interaction sessions and group activities which allow student leaders to better handle real-life situations when working with teams.

We decided to conduct interaction sessions with students on a regular basis to teach students applicable leadership skills and the purpose of having good moral values, thereby helping them to become a better influence to students around them and promote empathy, gratitude, respect and compassion amongst the people around them. We also planned to involve the student leaders in presentations and regularly allow students to take part in games and activities involving teamwork so as to ensure that student leaders are able to apply the skills taught when they work in teams in the future. The students' reflections and feedback are also noted so as to improve and adapt our teaching styles based on the groups of student leaders we are working with.

Furthermore, we also planned to give them notebooks ("A Good deed-A-Day Notebooks"), where they can record the good things they have done everyday while also recording their thoughts and reflections after every interaction session, allowing them to observe their learning progress and how they have improved their character over time.

By showing student leaders the methods in which they can become better leaders while also practicing good values in their lives, we aim to allow the student leaders to gain more exposure and be more readily equipped to, handle real-life situations when working together with a team.

Implementation of Action Plan

Month	Activity
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set our objectives and started planning for courses ● Contacted Punggol View Primary and submitted a detailed work plan ● However, we were told a month after contacting them that they had hired professionals to carry out the programme for their student leaders, and they withdrew
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Approached other schools
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Linked up with Sembawang Primary School ● However, as the schedules for the student leaders were very packed, and they were unable to find free slots for us, so they had no choice but to withdraw as well

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planned for Interaction Sessions in May
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planned for June Camp ● Approached CARE@SG
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contacted 6 other primary schools ● Linked up with Greenridge and Bukit Panjang Primary ● Planned for Interaction Sessions
July - August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conducted 4 Interaction Sessions with Greenridge Primary and 5 with Bukit Panjang Primary School ● New set of activities every session ● Eg. Interactive lessons, Fun team-building games, video viewing, craft making, verbal reflections, and ‘Good deed a day’

Evaluation of Outcomes

Through the interaction sessions, the students were able to learn more about Empathy, Gratitude, Respect and Compassion and learn valuable leadership skills while having a fun time. The students were able to differentiate between the different kinds of leadership styles and learnt how to apply good leadership skills into scenarios involving teamwork and coordination.

Furthermore, students were able to learn the qualities of good leaders and learnt how they can be good leaders in their classes and families. The ‘Good-Deed a day’ notebooks also encouraged them to perform acts of kindness more often and allowed them to observe how they have changed for the better over the weeks and months. The team-building games and activities not only allowed for students to apply what they have been taught into action, but also allowed them to experience what it’s like to work as a team and learn more about team dynamics and how to manage relations with their teammates all while solving a puzzle or overcoming an obstacle and learn the value of communication.

Mrs Heng-Wang Yingshan, the Subject Head of Student Leadership of Greenridge Primary said “The team has done a great job from planning to the execution of the lessons. The students enjoyed the activities and learnt important values through these lessons”.

Reflections

Through the interaction sessions, we learnt a lot about the students. At first, we thought that they would not be able to pick up what we taught them but during individual reflections after each activity and sharing sessions, the student leaders from both Greenridge and Bukit Panjang Primary school were receptive and able to bring valuable tips and advice away from our lessons and improve on their own leadership skills. Although they always seemed confused and not clear on how to solve certain problems and get over obstacles they encounter during the activities held during the interaction sessions, the students were always able to come together and produce a solution in which all in their groups were agreeable in. Not only did the students use the methods that were taught to come to a conclusion while working with their teams, they were also able to work together with their teammates to execute their plan very smoothly, showing how much they understand in terms of team dynamics and working together to solve a difficult problem. During individual reflections after each activity and sharing sessions, the student leaders from both Greenridge and Bukit Panjang Primary school were receptive and able to bring valuable tips and advice away from our lessons and improve on their own leadership skills.

We have also faced countless setbacks through the course of our project and we are glad that we were able to overcome these setbacks together as a team. We managed to persevere and be resilient throughout the project, allowing for us to conduct our interaction sessions with 2 schools eventually. Even with our initial differences in managing tasks, we were able to cooperate very well and efficiently get back up and continue our project. Through constant efforts contacting schools to planning and organising the student interaction sessions, we were able to eventually successfully carry out our programmes. We feel that this project has taught us much in terms of teamwork and our work attitude, and we are satisfied that we have brought the project this far.

However, we could have improved the handling of administrative matters on our side, as the various problems that came up before we were able to secure a course and fully plan interaction sessions with the primary school student leaders could have been avoided to some extent if we had established better contact with our beneficiaries. However, after encountering these obstacles, the four of us as a team were able to work together and avoid further obstacles, in the end successfully holding courses for the student leaders of two primary schools and allowing them to be better leaders and citizens of tomorrow.

(Word Count: 1487 words)

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