

Project WINGS

#07-20

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Single-Year Project

Project Overview

A) Area of Concern

5800 students from Singapore participated in an OECD survey, with results showing that students from poorer families were 4 times as likely to be low performers as compared to their affluent peers.

Youths from lower income families cannot afford additional educational expenditure like tuition, which places them at a disadvantage when compared to their affluent peers. This may affect their learning mindset when they fare lower in the examinations than their affluent peers, discouraging them since they view themselves as inferior to others. Such mental issues have long term consequences, and may affect the child when he/she enters the workplace, where the environment is more competitive.

This situation applies to the students involved in The Young Student Programme (TYSP), a Westwood Primary School initiative to support Primary One and Two students from low-income households, the goal being to address this issue of opportunity gaps, through providing them with additional learning support.

B) Challenges Identified

1. With P1s and P2s as our target audience, it was mandatory that activities were simplified and suited to their ability, leaving us with limited options in the variety of activities we could execute. Moreover, our activities needed to be engaging due to their short attention span.
2. According to an interview with Ms Lee who founded TYSP, one key issue the programme faced was manpower in terms of student volunteers. Many VIA projects done by students previously were of a one-off basis that was unsustainable. Through our project, we intended to establish an interconnected network of resources with other schools, eliminating the manpower issue in the programme, creating a more sustainable VIA framework that benefits the TYSP in the future.

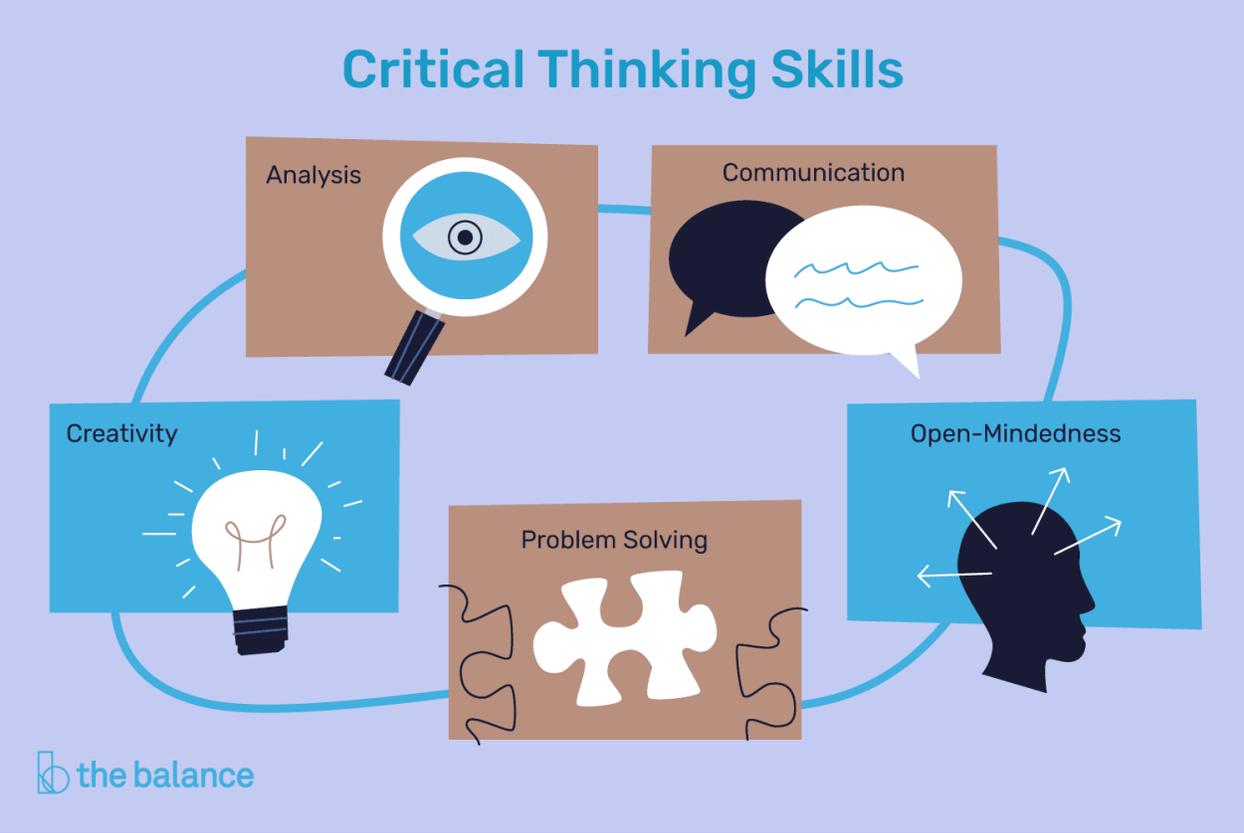
C) Underlying Problem

Given that these youths are unable to obtain additional learning aids due to their financial status unlike their affluent peers, many of them are unable to build a strong academic foundation, resulting in gaps in their academic performances when compared to others, causing them to feel disheartened towards learning. How can we provide them with impactful activities and help them be more positively engaged in their learning, providing them with a better foundation in learning for the future?

D) Plan of Action

To accomplish our objectives, we employed a multi-pronged approach through furthering aspects of critical thinking skills and inculcating values in students. Through this, we aim to build a strong academic foundation in them, making them more positively engaged in their learning, whilst developing values that will benefit them in the future.

These thinking skills can be classified in the diagram below:



Implementation of the Plan

A) Actions/Outcomes to Date

Time Period	Event	Objectives
March-May	<i>Weekly Visits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Skills: Problem Solving, Communication, Open-Mindedness ❖ Think actively to find solutions to problems encountered ❖ Work together in groups ❖ Consider opinions of others when tackling problems
	<i>Preparation of future activities</i>	
May	<i>Workshops for Sec 2 buddies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Review/improve on weekly sessions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Briefings on activities ❖ Guide them on execution of activities 	<p>by providing feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Teach buddies the workings behind conducting VIA activities such that knowledge can be passed down between batches of volunteers to establish continuity ❖ Motivate them in initiating personal VIA projects
June Holidays	<p><i>FOSA (Festival of Science and Arts)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Conducted science experiments relevant to syllabus ❖ Worksheets to practice concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Skills: Analysis, Problem Solving ❖ Analyse different science experiments in-depth and think of relation to science concepts and environment ❖ Worksheets consist of questions for students to apply acquired knowledge to solve
July	<p><i>Games (English grammar, Math, general knowledge and Sudoku)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Played during the weekly visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Skills: Problem Solving, Communication ❖ Students worked together to think of solutions quickly to gain the most points
	<p><i>Appreciation Card Writing and Origami Folding</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Skills: Analysis, Creativity ❖ Instill sense of appreciation and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Students folded origami and wrote cards to school staff 	<p>gratitude for others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Students to try on their own ❖ Explore alternative methods to fold origami to make it unique
	<p><i>Virtual Learning Journey: Amazing Race @ Singapore Botanic Gardens</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Usage of google maps ❖ Students competed against each other to complete a worksheet and explore locations in a race format 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Skills: Communication, Open-Mindedness ❖ Work together to complete tasks ❖ New form of learning outside of the classroom ❖ Platform for healthy competition to encourage teamwork, leadership and sportsmanship
September	<p><i>Learning Journey with RI and AMK Primary School</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ LJ to Science Centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Skills: Open-Mindedness ❖ Students are exposed to knowledge out of syllabus ❖ Help in establishing a more united VIA structure for TYSP where resources between schools are shared

Project Outcomes

A) Accomplishments

We reached out to an average of 30 students per visit. 25 HCI buddies were involved in each session. The FOSA involved a total of 25 students across Primary 2 to 5.

We received an overwhelming response from the students in surveys. 90% of them enjoyed our activities and were interested in coming back. The aforementioned activities were all completed successfully except for the learning journey.

The children will be coming over for an Appreciation Day event on 3 August, to express their gratitude to our team and student volunteers, which shows the extensive impact we made on them.

B) Reflection on Project

Group:

1. When introducing our activities, we initially thought that the students would lose interest and doubted their ability to understand our activities. However, the students were enthusiastic and had a positive attitude towards learning. This attitude is something we should emulate, after seeing the effort they put into learning.
2. Our mentality in dealing with people from lower income families has seen a shift. While we initially assumed that it would be difficult to relate to them due to differences in social-economic status. This project helped to dispel that notion, by lifting the metaphorical blindfold. After communicating with them, we realised that we should not make such false assumptions, and that they were every bit the human we were.

Impact on the Beneficiary:

1. Spark interests in the students towards academics and help the students be more engaged in learning
 - ❖ As students seemed unengaged towards the earlier activities we

conducted, we decided to incorporate more interesting and unique elements in our activities. This got students more involved and enthusiastic in our lessons as seen in their increased participation and their positive feedback from our survey.

Reflection on Wider Community:

1. There are certain minorities in our community that need help and society should place more emphasis on them.
 - ❖ The issue of students being disadvantaged financially affecting their academics is not widely known. Due to the lack of awareness, there are less people who are willing to go out of their way to address this issue, resulting in less volunteers willing to participate and spend time on helping these children and their families.
 - ❖ More efforts are needed to raise awareness on this issue and the more privileged should extend their help to these groups of people.
2. Our beneficiary has limited resources manpower-wise and require more volunteers to be able to have an impact on these financially disadvantaged students.
 - ❖ Our beneficiary runs this programme on a voluntary basis and has a limited pool to draw from in regards to human resources. More constant and sustainable student involvement will be needed to ensure the continuity of the TYSP in the future.

C) Scope of the Project:

Community involvement: We managed to get 7 OT members together and 25 student volunteers from RI and HCI to assist in our activities. They were key in ensuring the success of our project. They also become more knowledgeable about our cause. We sought to inspire these volunteers to continue to contribute and make a difference even after graduating from school.

Resolution of AOC/UP: Given that we identified opportunity and learning gaps between lower-income and affluent families, we have tackled this issue through various activities that aided them in establishing a positive learning attitude, engaging different thinking skills and inculcating values in them. This has helped improve on their academic foundation, giving them a positive outlook towards learning, and they developed values that will benefit them in the future.

Foundation for future development in this project has been established through the continuous involvement of HCI students and establishment of new groups to further this project. We recognise that what we do will not solve the Herculean goal of eliminating the learning gap, and there will always be less fortunate youths that require assistance. To tackle this, a continuous involvement of VIA projects is needed to help these students, and a greater network of projects with the common goal to help these students can be established, promoting better sharing of resources and bringing about a more efficient and sustainable system in such projects. Our hope is that future teams who endeavour to tackle this challenge will do so through developing the groundwork we have laid, and in time contribute to narrowing the educational gap between the affluent and less fortunate in society.