

Teach Less, Learn More? Unravelling the Paradox with People Development

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Abstract: In the course of the Think Less, Learn More (TLLM) philosophy expounded by Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong in 2004, the focus has primarily been on teachers to "Teach Less" so that students can "Learn More". Although it remains important for teachers to review and revise existing pedagogy to optimize the classroom learning experience, students' integral role in this TLLM framework should also be addressed to maximize its potential in achieving educational objectives. In realizing the aims of achieving quality engaged learning, it is thus imperative that students play a more active part in attaining TLLM in schools. As such, people development provides a viable means to instill sound moral values in students, encouraging active engagement in the classroom while promoting independent learning beyond the boundaries of class and textbooks. This paper outlines a college in Singapore's journey to build a model of education which focuses on people development as well as the transformation and amelioration that this endeavour has harvested.

Keywords: People Development, Values Education, Singapore

Introduction

"Teach Less, Learn More!" (TLLM¹) Singapore's Prime Minister, Lee Hsien Loong, gave this clarion call in his inaugural National Day Rally Speech in 2004. He called for schools to "Teach Less" so that students can "Learn More". (Lee, 2004) This holistic approach towards education required schools and educators to re-think existing education strategies and focus on the complete development of the child, to reiterate that "grades are not the only thing in life and there are other things in life which we want to learn in school." (Lee, 2004) While it can be seen as an impetus for educators to better their pedagogy and innovate their lessons for a richer and more fulfilling classroom experience and also a heralding of the curriculum review where content reduction could possibly happen, these efforts are, at best, positioned only to win half the battle.

The key towards an effective attainment of the somewhat nebulous TLLM lies not just in the producer of quality engaged learning but also in the recipients of the learning themselves. The dismal failures of some of the well-crafted lessons designed with the best intentions when met with dispassionate and disinterested learners are proverbial. This is indicative that just as selecting the seeds and methods of planting is important, crucial emphasis must be given to the tilling of the ground so that it is ready for the seed.

This preparation of the ground is one of the most essential, but often neglected, components of education – Character Development. Only a student that is disciplined and motivated will engage actively with the learning in the classroom and only a student that has a strong sense of appreciation of the learning and a keen sense of responsibility will take learning beyond the confines of the classrooms and the textbooks. In other words, the

¹ Ministry of Education, Singapore, TLLM webpage: <http://www.moe.gov.sg/bluesky/tllm.htm>

instilling of sound moral values in our students is imperative, if quality engaged learning is to take place.

Such an ethos places due emphasis on values education and in Jurong Junior College (JJ)², we have made People Development a prime focus. With the in-house developed People Development Conceptual Model which synthesises Asian philosophy which emphasises the harmony of complements along with Western theories in psychology and pedagogy, JJ has developed a unique People Development Training Framework, which is formulated along the lines of the Asian thinking model of 修身, 齐家, 治国, 平天下.

The JJ Journey

A series of measures and activities were launched in 2003 to reinvent, renew and rejuvenate the college, staff and students. Conscientious reviews over time brought about the formulation of the JJ People Development (PD) Philosophy with the aim of providing relevant and holistic education beyond the focus on academia.

Envisioning Education (Vision, Commitment)

Keeping in sight the vision of transforming JJ into A Top Choice Junior College, the missions expressed on the levels of college, staff and students are aligned towards a focus on the provision of quality and well-rounded education for our students. The college's mission is to be an Edupreneurial College where students are immersed in an enterprising and creative educational environment that is designed to spark off interests and ignite a spirit of innovation. Teachers are developed to be instructional leaders so as to better provide quality education and function as coaches and mentors exemplifying model behaviour for students. The mission for students is to become Globalised Independent Life Long Learner (GILLS) who are leaders of tomorrow fortified with strong character and sound values. (Figure 1)

Under the JJ Revised Curriculum Framework (JJRCF) the academic or Institution Governed Programme (IGP) and Interest Directed Programme (IDP) are designed to help our students qualify for the university and develop a life-long hobby respectively. The People Development Programme (PDP), central to the JJRCF, is developed to instil sound moral values in our students. The student-centred thrust in the JJRCF functions to develop all aspects of the student through maximising his academic capacity, fuelling his interest to grow into a passion and developing his character. In particular, the PDP directly impacts the students' character development by providing values education through activities and training designed towards experiential learning. (Figure 2)

Enhancing Effectiveness (Approaches, Systems, Processes)

JJ has developed in-house, a comprehensive and staged curriculum for leadership training, the JJ PD Training Framework (JJ PDTF) (Figure 3), to inculcate values, impart skills and build the character of every student. 4 levels of leadership are identified and key skills associated with each level are imparted along with the consistent infusion of values. Hence, on every level, skills are acquired progressively with behavioural qualities observed in incremental development and maturity.

In JJ PDTF, the 4 levels of leadership are succinctly encapsulated in the adage 修身, 齐家, 治国, 平天下. 修身 is understood as Personal Leadership whereas 齐家 is translated as Team

² College webpage: <http://www.jurongjc.moe.edu.sg/>

Leadership. A higher level is 治国 which is interpreted as Organisational Leadership and the pinnacle of achievement is 平天下 which refers to Global Leadership. As seen in the JJ PDTF, the levels are staged to cater to the entire student body yet responsive enough to meet the needs of promising students.

The entire student cohort will attend the SDSM Orientation camp upon admission to JJ. This begins their leadership training where activities are focused on Personal Leadership. From this phase, promising students can choose to continue their training through other camps and programmes focused on developing Team Leadership. The outstanding students who take up leadership positions amongst their peers are further trained through overseas training trips in the area of Organisational Leadership. Leaders with potential will be given opportunities and exposure to hone their abilities through high profile events and competitions where representation is made on the national level to develop Global Leadership.

Through the developmental training conducted on different leadership levels, key skills and competencies identified for each level are imparted. The college also identified 2 governing core values (主导价值观) intrinsic to JJ's PD thrust. They are namely a sense of appreciation (SA) 感恩心 and a sense of responsibility (SR) 责任感. SA refers to emotions, usually triggered by gratitude. SR, however, renders the SA into actions. For example, although a person could feel appreciative and grateful towards the nation, it is his SR that will translate these feelings into actions prompting him to fight for the country in times of need. The infusion of SA and SR will develop the behavioural values (行为价值观) of self-discipline and self-motivation (SDSM) 自律自强. SD is a commitment to affirm model behaviour and adopt positive attitude. SM is the drive to strive for excellence and aspire for continuous improvement. SDSM is demonstrated through the identified principal behavioural qualities (行为道德) such as 忠, 诚, 信, 爱, 礼, 义, 廉, 耻, loosely translated as loyalty/faithfulness, sincerity/honesty, trustworthiness/confidence, love/care & concern, courtesy/respect, righteousness, simplicity/uprightness and humility.

The JJ PDTF stems from the college's extrapolation from the 道 (Tao) of Education, an Asian philosophy with much current attention and interest in the west. This philosophy espoused by Lao Tzu in the classic 道德经 (Tao Te Ching), is valuable for application in 道德教育 (Values Education), particularly in the Asian context. The JJ PD Philosophy, though rooted in Asian values, interfaces and engages with contemporary theories in pedagogy and psychology, thus creating an approach unique to JJ as well as culturally relevant for schools in Asia. The schematic diagram represents the dynamics in the JJ PD Philosophy of instilling in the students the governing core values of SASR so as to bring about the behavioural values of SDSM. In turn, the centrifugal impetus generated by SDSM is expressed through good behaviour, of which we have identified 8 principal behavioural qualities. (Figure 4)

Enculturing Environment (Culture, Care, Shared Responsibilities)

Recognising the importance of communicating JJ's vision and missions (JJVM) to the key stakeholders, the college has established various channels for transmission such as the distribution of the corporate folder and college newsletters to the students, parents, staff, SAC, ministries and MPs. Translation of JJVM to students and staff takes place regularly through staff contact time, principal's dialogues and informal sessions. The open door policy of the leadership encourages clarification and feedback from students and staff on policies and programmes in JJ. Executive decisions are guided by the student-centred focus where priority and top consideration are given to students.

JJVM is cascaded down the levels and translated into actions by all staff. Following JJ Amoeba Management Principle, all teachers are empowered to lead and contribute to the college. The JJindogu Thinking Model also encourages bottom-up initiatives from staff and students fostering openness, vibrancy and the festering of creativity. Every JJ teacher is also involved in PD. The training of new JJ teachers follows a comprehensive programme spanning from the infusing of the JJ VM through team-building activities, overseas training, as well as mentorship and pedagogy workshops in the department. JJ recognises the importance of each teacher. Hence, personnel, time and funds are set aside to initiate and develop staff.

Empowering Everyone (Collaboration, Resources)

Extensive resources are channelled towards the college PD thrust. This includes 2 HODs (Head of Department) to lead the 2 PD Departments. PD1 focuses on strengthening the CCAs (Co-Curricular Activities) as a foundation for the instilling of SDSM in the students while PD2 looks into the infusing of SASR through the various leadership training and programmes. JJ also assigned 8 PD Staff and 30 teachers to take on leadership roles in PD. The college's Corporate Services & Support Department also strives to create a network of partnership and opportunities through the various stakeholders for PD. This includes support from active alumni, collaboration with education consultancy, EA21 (Education Architects 21), as well as partnership with local institutions and overseas universities resulting in many overseas and local PD training in line with JJ's Bringing In, Going Beyond strategy.

In addition, JJ is putting up a \$2.4m PD Centre with all facilities totally devoted to PD usage. Since 2003, an average of a million dollars annually is utilised for PD. Resources have also been expended to conduct camps for schools at the cluster level. It is significant that JJ has been invited to conduct the leadership training camps for West 6 Cluster thrice consecutively, breaking away from the routine rotational hosting. This affirms the stature and good standing that JJ has amongst others in providing quality leadership training and character building programmes. (Tables 1, 2)

Evaluating Excellence (Indicators of Success)

JJ has come a long way since 2003. Success of our PD programme is reflected through the improvement in attitudes and behaviour of students. Positive trends include the significant absence of vandalism, theft, and smoking as well as the lack of other anti-social behaviour common to students in other schools. The improvements in the student cohort, positive feedback from the student and staff climate survey, improvement in our A-Level results, awards received and letters of commendation received from the public attest to the success of our college's PD thrust (Tables 3, 4, 5). More recently, on the 24th of September, JJ was also among the 13 schools awarded the inaugural Outstanding Development Award for Character Development by the Ministry of Education³. The receipt of this national level award is further recognition of JJ's success in configuring and implementing a comprehensive people development programme.

In addition, a structured approach to student evaluation through self-appraisal, peer appraisal and teacher appraisal is put in place for a more helpful, accurate and holistic review. This allows for a more complete assessment of JJ students within and beyond the context of

³ Source: Ministry of Education website: <http://www.moe.gov.sg/press/2006/pr20060924.htm>.

the classroom, incorporating multiple systems to evaluate and oversee students' development during their tenure in JJ.

Conclusion

The emphasis on fostering students to become more active participants in the learning process complements educators' role in promoting the Teach Less, Learn More initiative. Moreover, the effective attainment of TLLM can only be fully realized through meaningful collaboration between educators, as producers of quality engaged learning and students, as the recipients of learning. In the context of Jurong Junior College, we have strived to achieve this through a structured People Development programme aligned with our beliefs of providing holistic education to our students. From envisioning, enhancing, enculturing, empowering to evaluating, the focus in our philosophy, programmes and approaches centres on continuity and sustainability. While retaining the aim and philosophy, the systems and processes have the flexibility and adaptability to evolve in response to the improvement in our student cohort as a testimony of JJ as an organisation to learn and grow.

References

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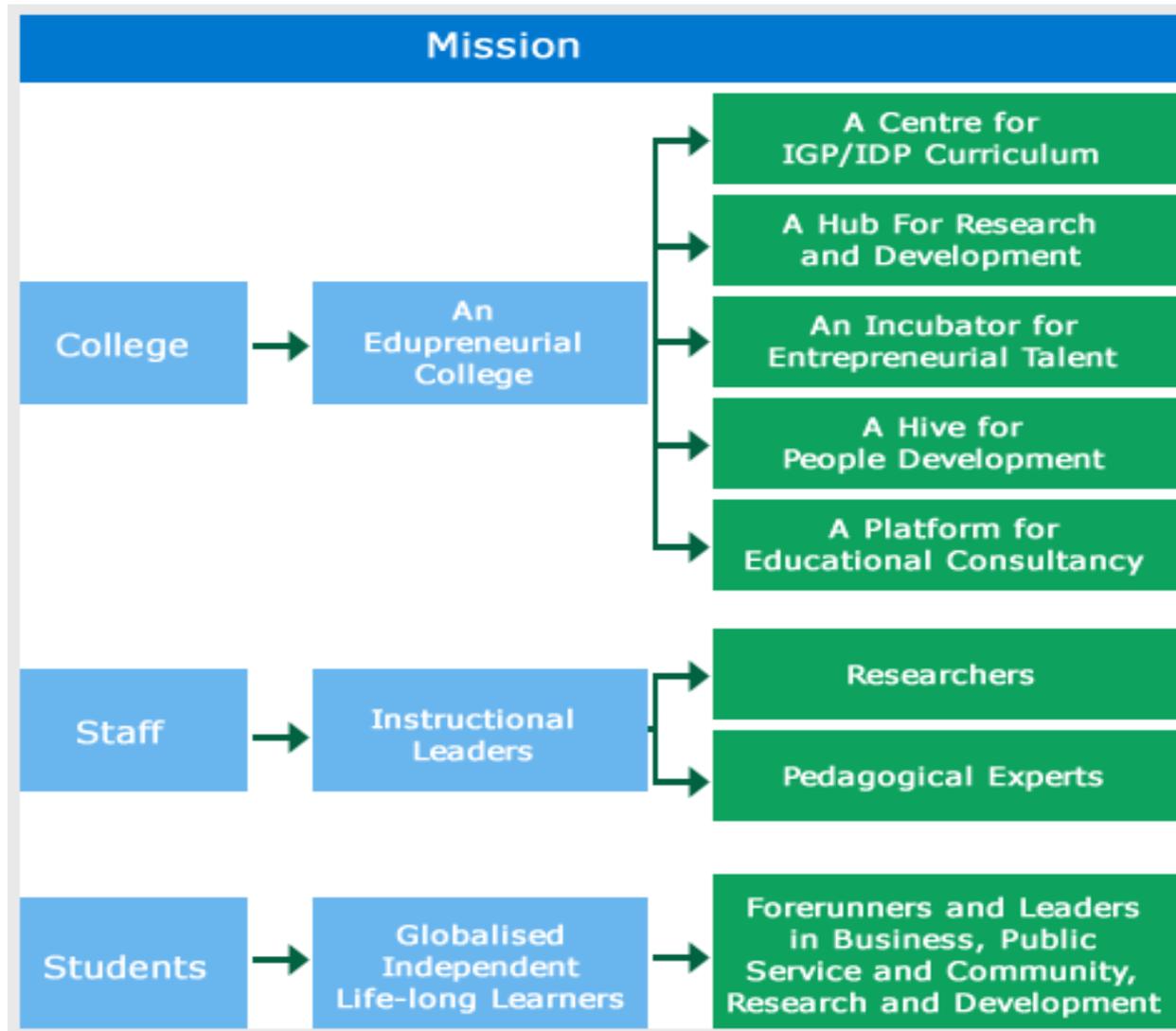


Figure 1: *The JJ Vision & Mission*

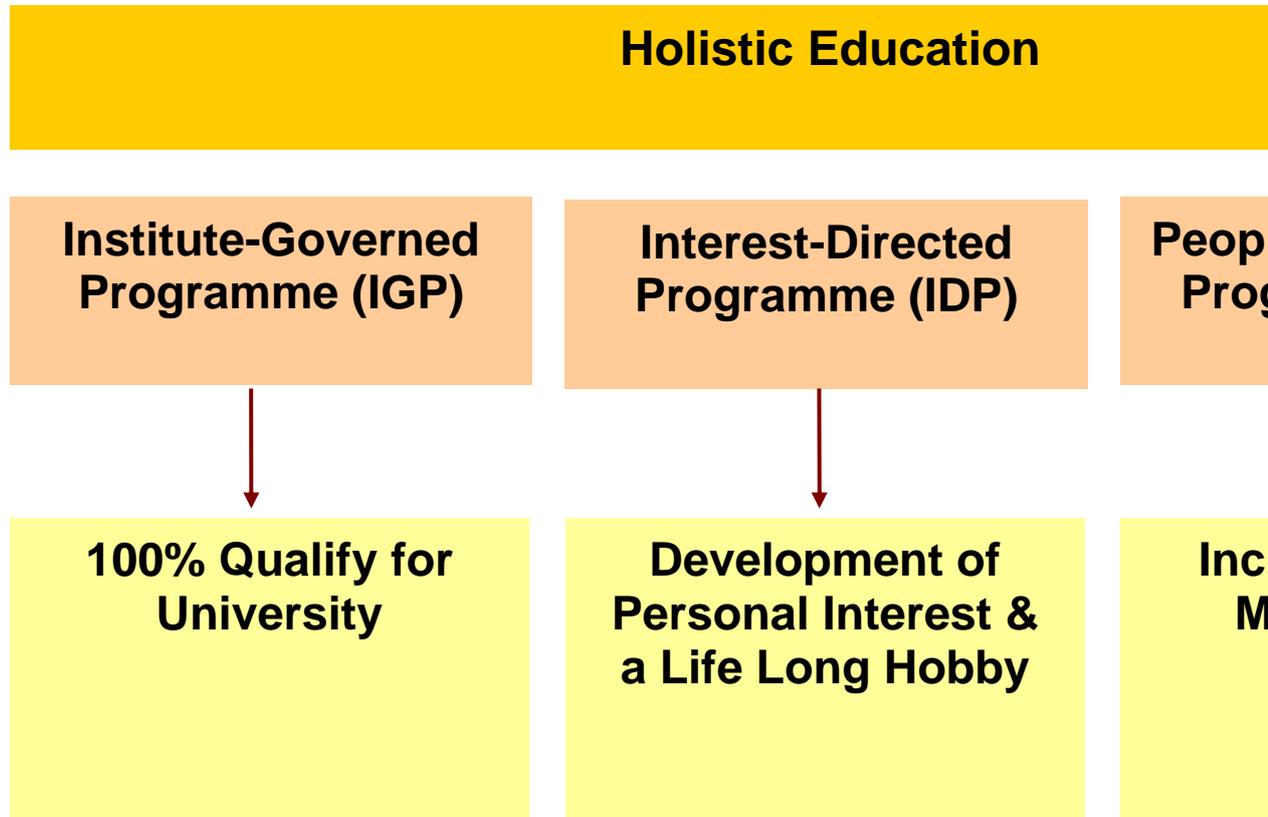


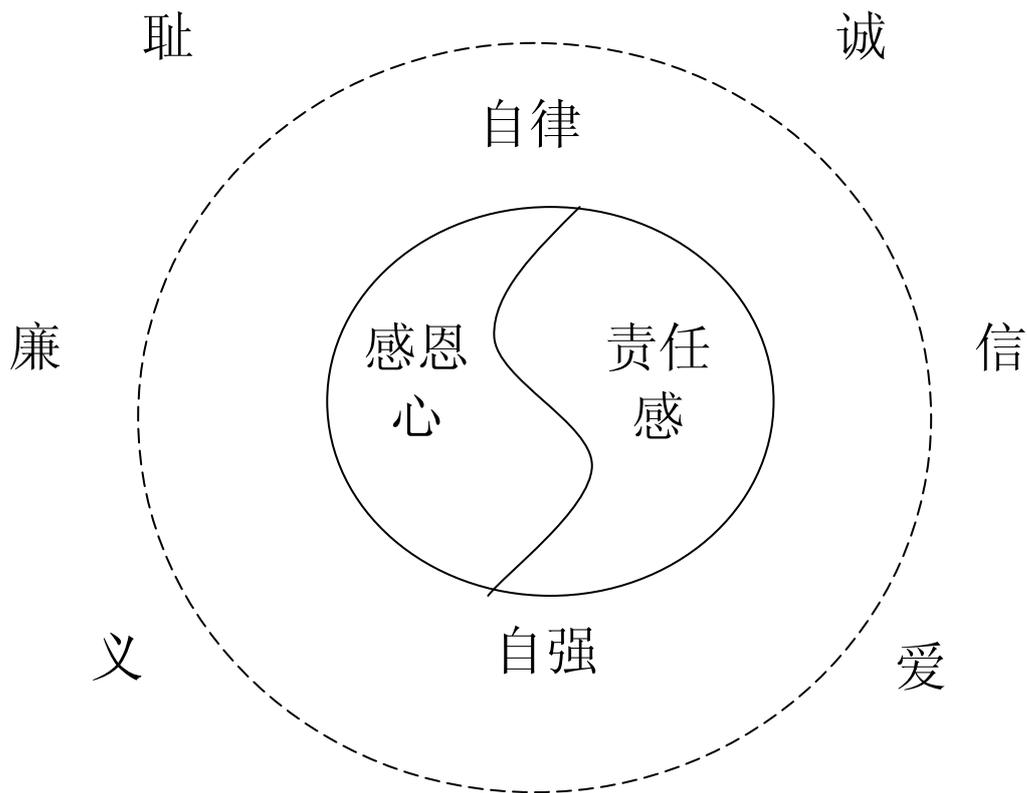
Figure 2: *JJ Revised Curriculum Framework (JJRCF)*

Programmes / Activities		Levels of Leadership		Learning Values		
Selected Group	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>20% (T)</td> <td>80% Application (A)</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to organise & participate in external events • Attachment Programmes • International / Regional events, e.g. Sunburst Camp 	20% (T)	80% Application (A)	Global Leadership 平天下		<u>Governing Core Values</u> SASR 感恩心 责任感
	20% (T)	80% Application (A)				
Councillors , CCA Leaders	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>50% (T)</td> <td>50% (A)</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Council /CCA Leaders' Camp • Lifeskills Package III, includes social etiquette, networking skills • International events, e.g. Overseas NE-CIP trips 	50% (T)	50% (A)	Organizational Leadership 治国		<u>Behavioural Values</u> SDSM 自律自强
	50% (T)	50% (A)				
Project Leaders	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>80% (T)</td> <td>20% (A)</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Leaders' Camp/ OGL Camps • Relationship / emotional management , includes conflict resolution skills • Lifeskills Package II , includes higher order / critical thinking skills, stress management 	80% (T)	20% (A)	Team Leadership 齐家		<u>Behavioural Qualities</u> 忠 忠诚 信 信 爱 爱 礼 礼 义 义 廉 廉 耻 耻 Loyalty / Faithfulness Sincerity / Honesty Trustworthiness Love / Care & Concern Respect/ Courtesy Righteousness Uprightness / Simplicity Humility / Modesty
	80% (T)	20% (A)				
All Students	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>100% Training (T)</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SDSM Orientation Camps • Service-Learning Training • Personal Profiling, includes DISC, 16PF • Lifeskills Package I. includes Motivation 	100% Training (T)	Personal Leadership 修身			
	100% Training (T)					

EQ: Emotional Quotient; **MQ:** Moral Quotient; **KQ:** Knowledge Quotient; **SQ:** Social Quotient; **AQ:** Adventure Quotient

Figure 3: JJ PD Training Framework (JJPDTF)

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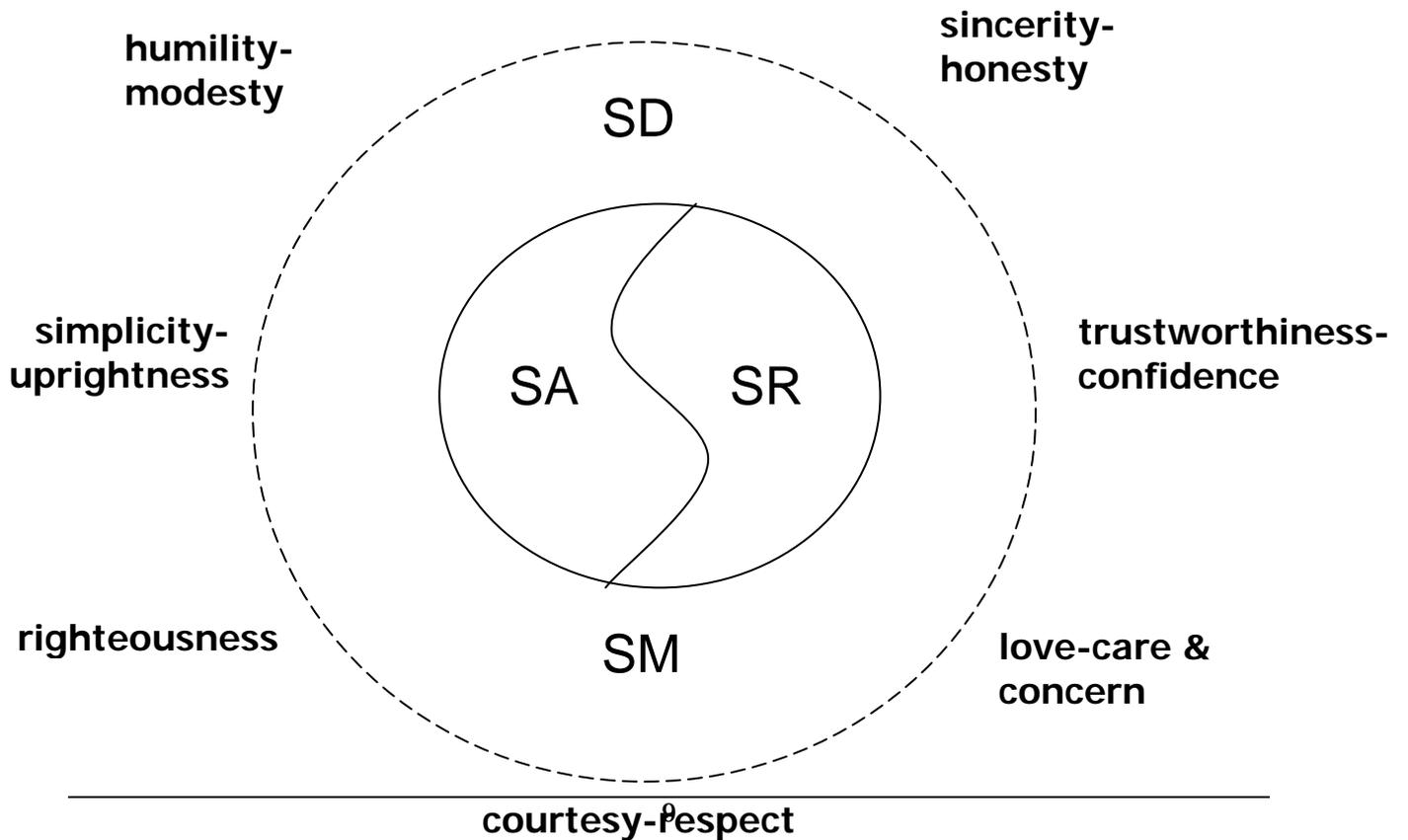


Figure 4: JJ PD Philosophy

Table 1: *Community Projects and Event Highlights*

Level	Project / Event
1. Personal Leadership	(a) Blood Donation Drives (2003, 2004, 2005) (b) Community Work (e.g. Walkathon, volunteering at welfare organisations) (2004, 2005) (c) Pledge Cards/ Fund-raising (e.g. Flag Days, Clearance Sales, Collection of items)
2. Team Leadership	(a) Peer Tutoring Programme to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unity Secondary School (Literacy Program) (2004) ▪ Nan Hua Secondary School (2005) ▪ Corporation Primary School (Mentorship Programme to coach Mathematics) (2005) ▪ Jurong Secondary School (Mentorship Programme) (2005) ▪ Commonwealth Secondary School (Peer Tutoring) (2004, 2005) (b) Facilitators for projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Safety and Security Program (South-west CDC) (2005) ▪ Tour Guides for Overseas Exchange Students (Nanyang CC, EA21) (2005)
3. Organisational Leadership	(a) Overseas Trips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership Training cum CIP Camp, Bin tan, Indonesia (2004) ▪ JJ Integrated NE / CIP Program, Yunnan, China (2004,2005) ▪ Leadership Training cum CIP Program, Pekanbaru, Indonesia (2005) ▪ Overseas Immersion cum CIP Trip, Medan, Indonesia (2005) ▪ Overseas NE/ CIP Project, Phnom Penh, Cambodia (2005) (b) Organisers of College Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Love Fiesta (Carnival) (2004, 2005) ▪ JJ Talentime (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006) (c) Conducting of camps and projects for the community and schools around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cluster West 6 Camp (2004, 2005) ▪ MCDYS Youth Camp (2004) ▪ CDAC / Fireflyz Learning Centre (2005, 2006) ▪ Leadership Camps (Jurong Primary School, Corporation Primary School, FuHua Sec School) ▪ Tamil Language and Cultural Camp (Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre) (2005)
4. Global Leadership	(a) Organizers of Community or National Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National Day Celebration@Heartlands (Jurong East) with Heartware Network (2005) ▪ HarmonyWorks with Central CDC (2005) ▪ Countdown for the New Year (Boon Lay CCC) (2003, 2004, 2005, 2006) ▪ Carnival By The Bay with Metta Welfare Organization (2004) ▪ ISD Mobile Exhibition (2005) (b) Organisers of National-level Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pre-University Seminar for all JC/ CIs (2005)

Level	Project / Event
	▪ International Chinese Riddle Competition (2004, 2006)

Tables 2(a)–(b): *Summary and Statistics of Community Projects for Singapore JC/CIs – Source: Schools Division, MOE (Singapore)*

Table 2(a): *Overseas CIP trips for JJ in 2004*

	Indonesia	China	Total from JJ	Total from S'pore
No. of Students	54	45	99	–
No. of Staff	6	15	21	–
Total	60	60	120* (20.7%)	580

* Out of the 18 JC/CIs in Singapore, JJ's overseas trips account for more than 20% of the national total.

Table 2(b): *Overseas CIP trips for JJ in 2005*

	Indonesia	Cambodia	China	Total from JJ	Total from S'pore
No. of Students	47	20	40	107	–
No. of Staff	20	2	8	30	–
Total	67	44	48	137	–

Tables 3(a)–(d): *Student Climate Survey 2005*Table 3(a): *Extracted from Section of Students' Climate Survey on Leadership (% of respondents)*

Items	2003	2004	2005
I am a role model to the student body	84.8	82.0	86.1
I am proud to serve the college as a student leader	96.5	91.0	94.3
Adequate enrichment activities to learn leadership skills	73.8	80.0	89.8
Sufficient opportunities to exercise leadership skills	73.3	77.0	85.0

Table 3(b): *Extracted from Section of Students' Climate Survey on Student-related items (% of respondents)*

Items	2003	2004	2005
Student leaders transmit good values to the student body	38.1	62.0	71.4
Sufficient leadership opportunities	48.3	70.0	73.3

Table 3(c): *Extracted from Section of Students' Climate Survey on Student-related items (% of respondents)*

Items	2003	2004	2005
Student leaders are good role models	39.5	61.0	65.9

Table 3(d): *Extracted from Section of Civics Programme Survey on Students' Social and Moral Development (% of respondents)*

Items	2004 (%)	2005 (%)
	Average	Average
I have become more self-disciplined	70.0	71.0
I feel a greater sense of connection and responsibility towards to the community	75.5	77.5
My understanding and appreciation of Singapore's cultural diversity has increased	71.0	83.5

Tables 4(a)–(b): *MOE School Climate Survey 2005*Table 4(a): *Extracted from Section of School Climate Survey (Education Officers) on Students' Behaviour (% of respondents)*

Items	2001 (%)		2005 (%)	
	National Mean (all JCs)	Mean of JJ	National Mean (all JCs)	Mean of JJ
Overall, the discipline of my students is good	4.50	4.49	4.54	4.69
My students are largely motivated	3.83	3.67	4.05	4.14

Table 4(b): *Extracted from Section of School Climate Survey (Education Officers) on Vision, mission and policies (% of respondents)*

Items	2005 (%)	
	National Mean (all JCs)	Mean of JJ
My school is focused on the holistic development of students	4.60	4.88
My school is pursuing the appropriate MOE HQ initiatives	4.58	4.71

Table 5: *Letters of Commendation*

----- From **Ms Tan Dan Wei Claudia**, Alumni of JJ on Sun, 30 Oct 2005 to JJ

"...JJ has certainly blossomed...the students are more vibrant... the immense pride I felt when JJ was featured during the MOE scholarship Induction Course as a model school that promotes innovation and enterprise..."

----- From **Dr Amy Khor**, Mayor South-West CDC on 30 Dec 2005 to JJ

"...the opportunity given by MOE speaks volumes of the Ministry's acknowledgement of the good work JJ has done...JJ has adopted a holistic education framework that spans the 5 aspects of developing a total student...JJ is the only JC to clinch the prestigious CSSP Award at the district as well as national level this year ... underlined by the core attitudes and values – Sense of Appreciation & Responsibility and Self-Discipline & Motivation- JJ has built for its students a good foundation...JJ is the first JC to be on the South West CDC Youth Excellence Award in the Heartland! (YEAH!) in 2006..."

----- From **Mr Benedict Keh**, Principal Assumption English School to JJ's principal

"... I must say that your teachers and student leaders have done an excellent job in running the leadership camp for the students from W6 Cluster schools... I could feel the high energy level and sense of enthusiasm of all involved in the camp. Within a short span of a few days, your staff and student leaders have succeeded in getting our students to behave as a collective and cohesive group as if they had been together for months. It brought out the best in them - both the givers as well as the recipients ..."

----- From **P.T. Benjamin**, member of public on Fri, 13 May 2005 to JJ after our Volleyball team won in the A-Division Championships

"... as an educator, I would like to highlight the truly commendable behaviour of your supporters. ...I noticed they weren't just cheering for JJ ...but for each of the team that we up (who went up to receive their prizes)...I was not the only one who was amazed and taken aback by this tremendous show of sportsmanship..."

----- From **Thaddeus Lawrence Leng**, Nanyang JC teacher on Thu, 12 May 2005 to JJ after our Volleyball team won in the A-Division Championships

"...I was thoroughly impressed with the pride and energy that your students demonstrated... most remarkable of all was their effortless ease in applauding and cheering their opponents. It is a trait that is lamentably missing in many of today's youth but your students have proved that graciousness and generosity is alive and well.... is a reflection of the culture that is being nurtured in Jurong Junior College..."

----- From **Ms Wong Chee Ai Elaine and Mdm Vijaya**, teachers of FuHua Sec Sch on Mon, 05 Sep 2005 after they went on an overseas training trip with JJ

"... the independence, spontaneity and the cheerfulness of your students impress us. Your students epitomize servant leaders..."

---- From **Mrs Mohana Ratnam Eswaran**, Chairman Cluster W6 Pupil Welfare / Discipline Comm on Wed, 28 Sep after JJ organized the Cluster W6 Camp

"... I was touched by the sincerity of your colleagues as well as your student leaders... I salute your team for going the extra mile in this collaborative project .."

----- From **Mr Sng Chin Seng**, Chairperson for Cluster West 6 LINE Camp HOD Discipline Zhenghua Secondary to JJ

"... Your Student Councillors are so good that I cannot help but stay late on the second night the goodness of your JJC Student Leadership Programme... resulted in such a high standard of training for the present JJC student leaders. "

---- From **Khairiah Jamaludeen**, student of JJ on Thu, 15 Sep 2005 after attending our leadership training camp

"...the camp has benefited me in many ways such as teaching leadership qualities, stress management methods and even new friends. I had enjoyed and learned from that camp and shared it with the audience of the Prime Minister's National Day Rally(NDR) dialogue session..."

---- From **Mr Patrick Goh Chai Sin**, Parent of ex-JJ student after going on an overseas trip with JJ

"... It was not an easy trip to organize but I was most impressed to learn that the students take turns to handle the logistics and administrations...suddenly I have faith in our youth again ...the teachers' most valuable contributions was their daily briefings and reflections with the students...really moved and inspired the students, to learn to appreciate their comfort back home as well as their families and friends..."
