"Classroom in community: serving the elderly people, learning from senior citizens" community-based service learning for secondary schools students in Hong Kong

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Abstract

Background: In recent years, more and more secondary schools in Hong Kong begin to employ service learning in designing student learning activities. A vast majority of these attempts is developed based on the philanthropic ideas of altruism, love and care; it involves serving elderly people living in the elderly homes far away from the school community. While it is quite right to say that both the students and the elderly people benefit from these projects; the connection of these students to their community, as well as the student learning from the senior citizens in these projects are still in question. In other words, there is a missing linkage between student learning and the community in these philanthropic service learning projects.

Aims or focus of discussion: In this paper, we suggest to bridge this missing linkage with the concept "classroom in community" to connect students, and their learning, with the community.

Arguments / comments /suggestion: Based on the service learning curriculum derived by us with local secondary schools, we will illustrate how "classroom in community" could facilitate students to learn from and learn for their community, and to act with the community to co-produce public goods. Examples of community based services for elderly people will be used to further elaborate how students could initiate community services through collective dialogues with the community, in these cases, to get connected with their community by serving the elderly people and learning from them as senior citizens.

Conclusion: A summary of the characteristics of the approach of classroom in community to service learning is suggested to conclude the paper.

Keywords: Community-based Service Learning, Classroom in community, intergenerational community services

"社區有教室：服務老人，向長者學習"——
以社區為本的香港中學學生服務學習計劃

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摘要

*背景：*近年，香港越來越多中學開始嘗試以服務學習作為教學活動。當中大部份的計劃，多以推廣關懷慈愛或慈善救濟作為理念基礎，而服務對象大多是遠離學校所在社區的長者。誠然，從上述服務當中，學生與長者是有所得著的。但是，在這些計劃能否連繫學生與身處社區和使學生從長者身上學習這兩個問題上，就值得存疑。換句話說，這些以慈善為理念基礎的服務學習計劃，欠缺了結連學生學習於身處的社區當中。

*目的或討論焦點：*我們透過本文提出善用"社區有教室"的概念來彌補這些不足，把學生、學習、以及社區三者緊密地結連起來。

*論點/評論/建議：*根據我們在中學進行服務學習課程的經驗，我們將透過本文說明"社區有教室"如何促進學生向社區學習和學習關顧社區，並以社區的集體利益為依歸，建構投入社區的具體行動。本文將以長者服務為例，闡述學生如何透過與社區展開對話來構建社區服務，結連學生學習於身處的社區當中，並達致"服務老人、向長者學習"的目標。

*總結：*我們會提出在應用"社區有教室"於服務學習中的幾點特色作為本文的總結。

關鍵詞：社區有教室，社區為本服務學習，長幼共融社會服務

In Hong Kong, service learning is in its initial phase of development in secondary schools and related documentation is limited (Lee, 2004). In recent years, more and more secondary schools in Hong Kong begin to employ service learning in designing student learning activities. Hong Kong is an aging society. According to the Hong Kong government statistics, around 17% of Hong Kong people is over ages 60, and the trend is increasing.[1] In recent years, issues of intergenerational solidity and community support for the elderly people gain increasing concerns in the government and NGO sectors. Service learning in this area catches the attention of community, teachers and students and becomes increasingly popular among secondary schools in Hong Kong. From our practice experiences with teachers of local secondary schools, we observe a vast majority of these attempts is developed based on the philanthropic ideas of altruism, love and care; it usually involves serving elderly people living in the elderly homes far away from the school community.

While it is found that charity model is an acceptable pedagogy to service learning (e.g. Chesler & Scalera, 2000; Harper, 1999; Kahne & Westheimer 1996), it has its inherent limitations and could be mis-educative(King, 2004). Literatures in service learning in general agree that charity model is not a sound pedagogy to promote mutuality and collaboration among students and between students and the community (e.g. King, 2004; Ward & Wolf-Wendel 2000); to empower community and students (e.g. Werner, Voce, Openshaw & Simons 2002); to respond to social justices and social issues (e.g. Boyle-Baise, 2002; Codispoti 2004; King, 2004; Sementelli, 2004);

and to facilitate the lasting development of service learning project (e.g. Codispoti 2004).

It is further revealed that these community services are usually arranged by established government funded elderly services agencies outside the geographical community of the schools. They are usually one-shot activities held outside the regular school hours. While teachers are contented that both the students and the elderly people benefit from the service learning projects, they identify several weaknesses of these projects. Firstly, students are "feeling good" after serving the elderly, but their reflections are "superficial". Secondly, students and elderly people interact, but chances for them to work together are limited. Mutuality is seldom developed. Thirdly, the linkage between curriculum and the community services is not strong. Service part is "weak". It could not arouse social concerns. This teachers' feedback is parallel with the service learning literatures. Students' learning in the community services is minimal and their learning from the senior citizens in these projects is in question.

Moreover, teachers also identified that community services arranged in non-school hours at distant community is not favorable for school arrangement, students' learning and engagement. It incurs additional costs for transportation, and discourages teachers' participation and students' motivation to learn and to serve. All these impede the development of service learning. Teachers urge for new ways to practice service learning to connect students to their community.

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1. Extracted from Hong Kong Statistics, Hong Kong Government website (http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hong_kong_statistics/statistical_tables/index.jsp?subjectID=1&tableID=002) on 25th May, 2009.

Many writers (e.g. Hargreaves,1982; King, 2004; Ogden & Claus,1999; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000; Werner et al., 2002) have addressed the teachers' concerns and suggested elements of good practice. However, connecting students and their learning with the community is rarely as neat and tidy a process as it is suggested. As little in the literature on service learning provides conceptual framework regarding the process of dynamic of connecting students learning to their community, in this paper, we propose the "Classroom in community" on service learning as one of the approaches in responding to the concerns of the teachers. "Classroom in community" is not only an approach to connect students, their learning and the community; as a pedagogical praxis to achieve holistic community building, it also realizes students' potential to become change agents of transformative social movement.

In the first part of the paper, we will outline the principles of "Classroom in community" and how we could employ these principles in service learning to develop lasting service learning projects. Based on the service learning curriculum derived by us with local secondary schools, we will illustrate how "classroom in community" could facilitate students to learn from and learn for their community, and to act with the community to produce public goods.

Examples of community based services for elderly people will be used to further elaborate how students could initiate community services through dialogue and collective action with the community, in these cases, to get connected with their community by serving the elderly people and learning from them as senior citizens.

Classroom in Community

"Classroom in Community" and Service Learning

Yu An Bang in his books (written in Chinese) *Classroom in Community: The Interplay and Dialogue between School Curriculum and Holistic Community Development (2002)* and *When School Curriculum Encounters Local Culture: A Critical Praxis of "Classroom in Community" (2005)* proposes "Classroom in community" as a pedagogical praxis to connect student learning to community, as well as a pedagogical model to achieve holistic community building (Yu, 2002: 20-21). "Classroom in community" is a form of experiential education that facilitate student learning and development through engaging in intentionally designed learning activities with and in the community. As a pedagogical praxis to achieve holistic community building, community service is considered to be one of the important constituents of "classroom in community" (Chen, 2005; Yu, 2002, 2005). According to Jacoby (1996), service learning is a form of experiential education wherein students engage in activities that address the human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Service learning can be a vehicle to engage student, school and community (McCathy, 2002; Vickers, Harris & McCathy, 2004) and to integrate community issues into curriculum (Couto, 1996). These all provide theoretical linkages between "classroom in community" and service learning, and the possibilities of employing principles of "classroom in community" in service learning. We will outline these principles, and in the latter part of this paper we will show how to apply these in service learning

by combining students' learning and community service in a symbiotic manner that link students' learning with and in the community that progress towards the service goals to achieve social cohesion or community building in that community.

Principles of "Classroom in Community"

In these two books, Yu (2002, 2005) sets out a numbers of interwoven ideas that are particularly relevant to guide educators to develop effective and sustainable curricula to connect students, and their learning, with the community. These concepts are (1) Community Education / Classroom in Community, (2) teachers as community learners and problem-posers, (3) "Community Capital" and "Curriculum capital". Each of these concepts represents different part of the overall process and dynamics of the "Classroom in community". We consider that these 3 concepts can be correspondingly regarded as the process and dynamics of (1) connecting school and the community, (2) connecting teachers and the community, and (3) connecting the curricula and the community.

We would like to discuss these briefly here to create a framework for better understanding of the philosophy and design of the Classroom in community.

To connect school and the community: community education / classroom in community (CIC). Yu (2002, 2005) states that school is one of the constituting parts of the community. The meaning of classroom should not be limited to the physical settings of schools, and should be extended to all implicit, explicit and hidden learning situations that happen inside and outside the school premises. Curriculum, which is a form of learning situation that consists of series of learning activities, refers to all formal, informal and hidden knowledge, tradition and cultural transmissions. Curriculum thus also constitutes part of the community activities and culture, which is non-linear, fluid and dynamic in nature. With this understanding, he proposes the concept of classroom in community to realize his ideas about the relationship between the schools and communities.

Yu (2002) describes the community education / classroom in community (CIC) as three interlocking parts; (1) education *about* the community, (2) education *for* the community, and (3) education *in/through* the community. Education *about* the community is the course of action the teachers, based on their own concerns in the community, facilitate students to think over their experiences about the community and to generate a preliminary understanding of it. Education *for* the community refers to the practices that teachers encourage and guide the students to explore different community issues of their interests based on their preliminary understanding. Education *in /through* the community is the process teachers and students engaging in the direct interaction with the community and its members, as learning resources to validate their understanding of the community, and as community resources to formulate action which is relevant to both the community members and the students.

The CIC curriculum is designed in the way to begin with education *about* the community, followed by education *for* the community, and then education *in/through* the community. When students validate

their understanding with the community members, or formulate their action for and with them, students have to involve in further investigating or even redefining the community issues with the community members (i.e. education *for* the community), and hence devise a new plan of action (i.e. education *in/through* the community). He sees this cycle of investigating, dialogue, planning and action as an "upwards spiral cycle" of knowledge / action integration. The integration is twofold. Firstly, students' living experiences and their understanding of the community are integrated with their action to community building, which is "local integration" (Yu, 2002). Secondly, in this "upward spiral cycle", students, teachers and community members are engaged in mutual dialogues and collaborative actions with their living experiences and shared understanding. He postulates this as a "system integration" because new system knowledge / action, which originated from living experiences and shared understanding, is developed to address the community issue at a higher system level.

Diagram 1 shows a pictorial representation of these three interlocking parts of community education (Yu. 2002):
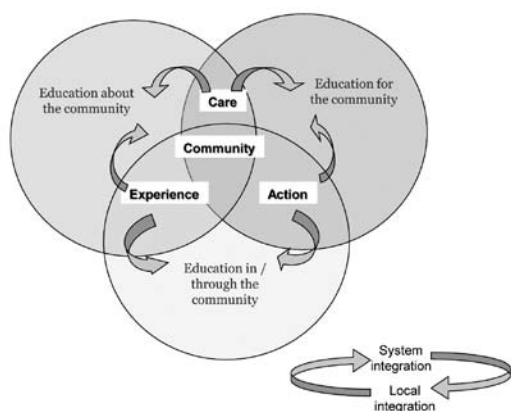

Diagram 1

The keywords "experience", "care", "action" represent the significant learning encounters of students engaging in respective two of these interlocking parts.

While considering CIC as an everyday life experiences to community building, Yu (2002) supplements that the three interlocking parts of CIC should reflect respectively the following three components: "learning social issues", "managing the relationship with the community members" and "engaging community members to act in the community". Diagram 2 shows a pictorial representation:
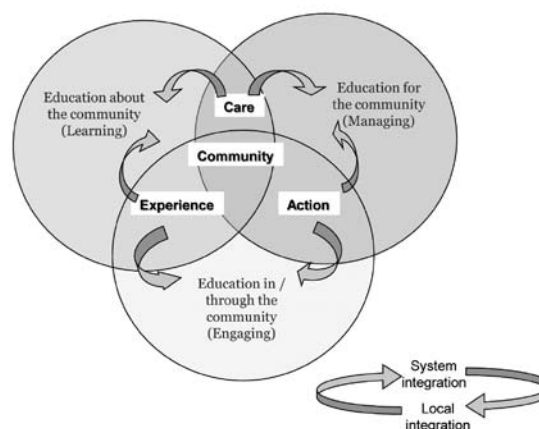

Diagram 2

Yu (2002, 2005) concludes that CIC forms the base for situated and constructive learning for students. Situated learning of CIC means that CIC learning is rooted in the lives, interests, themes, and concern of the students, and the real situations of the community. CIC also forms the basis of constructive learning because new knowledge / action are developed through active investigation and dialogue between students, as well as among students and community members. This provides possibilities of

teaching and learning in service learning. Literature in service learning (McCathy, 2002; Vickers et al, 2004) suggests using the schematic representation of triangle to illustrate the interconnection among community agencies, schools and students in service learning. Simply stated, in this triangle, schools teach knowledge, agencies provide service experiences, students learn by doing and through reflection. Vickers et al.(2004:133) argues "when that done correctly, service learning combines strong ties among the partners involved in the activities, and fluid and reciprocal forms of learning and reflection among all participants". The CIC does not only allow teachers to teach knowledge; the collective inquiries and the collaborative action natures of CIC draw people together to learn and act towards the goal of the holistic community building. Therefore, students in CIC learn from both the teachers and the community, as well as from their action in the community. Reflection happens during both the courses of collective inquiries and collaborative action. These affirm students as active learners and active change agents in the community. The community is empowered during both the processes of collaborative inquiries and collaborative action.

Moreover, CIC also empowers teachers to make use of both the discipline knowledge, and all possible learning from the community to teach. CIC affirms teachers as initiators to develop community-based curricula to engage students and community members in community building. The meaning is twofold. Teachers and curricula are the essential components of the school and the operant of CIC. They are also the constituting parts of the community. In this sense, teachers are both the initiators and partners of the CIC, and curricula are both learning activities and community activities. Yu(2005) goes

on suggesting how teachers position themselves as curriculum initiators and partners in CIC, and how to develop lasting curricula, hence connecting teachers and curricula with the community.

To connect teachers and the community: teachers as both the community learners and problem-posers. Yu (2002, 2005) sees that students, teachers, school and the community are the participants, contributors and users of the CIC curriculum. When CIC is initiated by teachers, they shall work collaboratively with these "curriculum participants". As such, Yu (2005) suggests teachers to shift their traditional roles of teacher-centered teaching and problem-solvers to that of community learners and problem-posers respectively.

Teachers as community learners. CIC suggests community is open and dynamic in nature. It is full of learning resources and learning opportunities for students. Yu (2005:25-26) deduces that teachers, in order to make use of these valuable resources in the community, shall see themselves as learners in the community. Teachers can learn from, for examples, senior citizens and professionals in the community, devise learning activities with them and invite them to be "teachers" of the school. He argues that the traditional teacher-centered model of teaching, in which teachers often "download and copy" a predetermined universal curriculum to teach, blocks the participation of "curriculum participants".

Learning in community is a continuous lesson. Teachers as community learners implies teachers are moving from "teaching knowledge for" the community to "realizing knowledge with" the community. This is a "know-how" to "know-why"

shift. In this move, teachers engage continuously in the collective inquiries with community members, i.e. "curriculum participants", which in turn facilitates teachers to generate meaningful and contextual questions for student learning in the course of CIC.

Teachers as problem-posers. While culture, tradition and mutuality are key elements to community building, Yu (2005) suggests these elements have to be renewed from time to time, so that the community have the power to renew itself. In doing so, teachers should see their mission as problem-posers in CIC.

Yu (2005), quoted the work of Apple (1990), argues the mission of problem-posing education is to demythologize;

> *"we need to place the knowledge that we teach, the social relations that dominate classrooms, the school as a mechanism of cultural and economic preservation and distribution, and finally, ourselves as people who work in these institutions, back into the context in which they all reside."* *(Apple, 1990:3).*

He further elaborated with the ideas of Macedo (1993), who sees problem-posing education as "men and women develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in the process of transformation" (Macedo, 1993:12)

He considers that integrating the problem-posing approach in community education shall encourage teachers to develop their critical understanding towards the existing social arrangements and conditions, to engage "curriculum participants" in this dialogical process, and to generate critical, relevant and motivating questions for and with them. Questions of these kinds provide the necessary momentum and tension for the "curriculum participants" to work together. They collaboratively inquire into these questions, form critical understanding in them and discover new knowledge towards the power structures to the existing social arrangements and conditions, and then try to answer the questions.

He further points out that the process is full of curiosity, enlightenments, while it is also a process with tension, stress and negotiation. As such, Yu (2005) considers problem-posing education is a dynamic, learner-centered process towards conscentization for each individual "curriculum participant". On the other hand, it engages "curriculum participants" together to address the issues and problems of interests to them and that are of significance to community, which will direct them to emancipation and naturally motivate them to act in the community.

We can go back to the CIC model. The 3 interlocking components: "learning", "managing" and "engaging". Teachers as community learners is more related to the "learning" and "managing", whereas teachers as problem-posers focuses more in "learning" and "engaging".

In short, while teachers as community learners facilitates cooperative and collective nature of enterprise, teachers as problem-posers induces a

critical nature in it, which naturally leads to critical action in the community.

To connect curricula and the community: "Community capital" and "Curriculum capital". It is clear that for teachers to initiate a curriculum in CIC in any community, it requires them to have a solid sense of community resources of that community, be able to locate the resources and involve them during the course of curriculum development. Meanwhile, Yu (2005) alerts that even though the notion of "community resources broker" is practical at the beginning phase of the CIC; it is not a sufficient notion for the teachers neither to set off continued CIC curricula, nor to sustain CIC to be a pedagogical movement to community building. Yu (2005) further proposes the concepts of "community capital" and "curriculum capital" to supplement the "broker" notion.

Yu (2005) proposes that "community capital" can present itself in four forms: as economic capital, cultural capital, social capital and environmental capital. The first three forms of capital are borrowed from the Bourdieu's (1986, 1992) concept of forms of capital. Environmental capital, as described in Yu(2005), is simply defined as the way our strategies to promote a more harmonious relationship between human and nature, or to preserve and conserve biodiversity and environmental assets, etc.

The concept of cultural capital suggests that individuals can acquire cultural capital through adopting certain kinds of cultural practices (Bourdieu, 1986). According to Yu (2002, 2005), curriculum in CIC is one of these cultural practices. Similar to those studies of Bourdieu's ideas about the role of cultural

capital in schools (e.g. Dumais, 2002; Emmison & Frow's, 1998; Graff, Graff & Kraaykamp, 2000; Gorder, 1980; Kingston, 2001; Martin & Szelenyi, 1987), Yu (2005) also asserts that schools have the reproductive role in cultural practices. Schools reflect and are responsive to the dominant cultural orientations that reproduce inequality and is usually oppressive in nature. He argues further one of the objectives of CIC is to open up new forms of structure of social relations among school, teachers and students within the community by connecting them with that community. Through bringing back teachers into the community, the teachers have to struggle for new positions within the community in the course of CIC curriculum development, such as to shift their roles to community learners and problem-posers as discussed earlier, the original habitus of these teachers is moved. Scholars (Harker, 1990; King, 2005) conceptualized this process with the ideas of structure and agency. In this sense, while school could have structural impediments to remove oppressive reproduction of dominant cultural practices, the CIC curriculum could cultivate education around the greater role of agency among teachers and individuals within the community, and hence a progression towards the pedagogical movement to community building to a just and equitable community.

As social capital exists in social network, the reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed (Bourdieu, 1986:52). Based on this notion of the reproduction of social capital, Yu (2005) considers that to connect curricula to the community is to cultivate a continuous series of exchanges

among teachers and individuals of the community to effect knowledge transfer with a good learning motivation from students. This is also the recognition that teachers and individuals of community would most like to be affirmed and reaffirmed.

Yu (2005) elaborates further on the transformation and dynamic between the "community capital" and "curriculum capital" in curriculum development. Teachers shall identify and mobilize different forms of "community capital", and then transform them into the "curriculum capital", i.e., the capital available during the course of the curriculum development in CIC. As the CIC directs to community building, new "community capital" is produced, and hence, new "curriculum capital" is developed. The convertibility of the different types of capital is the basis of strategies aimed at ensuring the reproduction of capital (Bourdieu, 1986:52) and among other forms of capital, Yu (2005) considers that social capital is the most ready form of capital for transformation in CIC curriculum development. The cycle of capital transformation and reproduction is a spiral process. It inherently directs to the process of student learning and community building, i.e. the spiral cycle of "local integration" and "system integration" in CIC. If the school could develop favorable conditions for capital transformation and reproduction, the CIC can be prolonged in the community.

Service Learning Curriculum: Serving the Elderly, Learning from Senior Citizens

Background of the Service Learning Curriculum

During these four years, we have derived several community-based services learning project with local secondary schools echoing to the theme "Senior Citizens and the Community" in response to the recent trend in Hong Kong. The CIC approach to service learning has been used. The projects share these common characteristics: (1) community services include cross-disciplinary courses, (2) community services are initiated by students, and (3) community services are ran within the local community. These projects are derived for S2 or S3 students. As these projects are included in the prescribed subjects of study, participation of students is universal and compulsory. The projects last for at least one school semester, for example, around 4-6 months. These projects are the joint ventures between us, as youth workers in the community, and the school teachers, we see us as a team is the curriculum initiator of these projects. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss how CIC guides the development of these projects.

Community Investigation: Mapping community resources

Yu (2005) proposes to initiate CIC with community investigation and mapping community resources. Community investigation is not only about identifying the needs or deficits of the community. We also need to discover the community assets, such as resources persons, community lives and stories, places and buildings, tradition and gifts of the community, and map them out as

"community capital". Observations, dialogues and empathic understanding are the essential activities in conducting community investigation. Kretzmann and McKnight (1993) and Yu (2005) suggest ways to do it. While we cannot go into their ideas further in this paper, they both agree that the relationship or the social capital we built in the process is the most important in the whole community investigation. Social capital is the most ready accessible form of "community capital" we could use in the CIC (Yu, 2005).

Teachers and we also follow the path of community investigation to initiate our service learning curriculum. To echo the overall themes "Senior Citizens and the Community", we focus the community investigations on expanding our understanding to the lives and living experiences of elderly people in the community. In this stock checking exercise, it is quite common for us to network senior citizens to "teach" in class and identify new community services opportunities. Most importantly, teachers begin to realize the positive aspects of elderly people and think about linking community assets in teaching.

Indeed, when community investigation is conducted with students, it could also provide a good basis for the developing meaningful service learning projects. For examples, students study Economic and Public Affair (EPA) could conduct community investigation to explore the attitudes of senior citizens towards "old ages allowance" and students study Design and Technology (D&T) could conduct community investigation about the facilities and equipment of community gardens to see whether they are user-friendly for senior citizens.

The community investigation turns students, teachers and social workers to be "community learners" and engages senior citizens as "curriculum participants". It ties students, school and community together (Yu, 2005). This creates "curriculum capital" for curriculum initiators and hence facilitates the development of strong and reciprocal service learning project (McCarthy, 2002; Vickers et al., 2004).

Initiating Service Learning Curriculum

Transformation of "community capital" to "curriculum capital" is the central issue of curriculum initiation. This is the process of transforming the capital we have identified to the capital we could use in our curriculum. A powerful curriculum issue is favorable for this process. A powerful issue is a set of motivational and relevant questions that could engage students in the learning process (Yu, 2005), and connect to larger communities (Codispoti, 2004; Hargreaves, 1982) which provide the momentum and tension for the "curriculum participants" to work together (Yu, 2005).

While we design the service learning curriculum, we include cross-disciplinary subjects and team teaching strategies in our design. Cross-disciplinaries team could facilitate us to put forward a powerful issue in our curriculum (Chen, 2005; Codispoti, 2004; Ogden & Claus, 1999; Yu, 2005). Issue setting is sequences of dialogue and capital matching among social worker and teachers of different disciplines, and among different disciplines of knowledge and our community understanding. It is the realization of how much "community capital" we can transform to "curriculum capital". In our project experiences, powerful issues could facilitate students to find

answers from senior citizens in the community and motivate students to apply their learning to develop community services which are relevant to the senior citizens. For example, in one of our projects, teachers from disciplines of Economic and Public Affair, Home Economic and Design and Technology form a team and set a powerful issue: "A healthy and wealthy lives and lifestyles for senior citizens". We will discuss it in the following paragraphs to show the characteristics of CIC service learning.

Service Learning Curriculum

Following the CIC learning cycle discussed above, learning in community is the integral part of student learning. Our curriculum is designed in this connection. It is structured in a way that traditional classroom teaching sessions interlace with community experiences sessions. While traditional service learning curriculum is often a linear curriculum, following the knowledge-service-reflection prototype, in which knowledge is mainly came from school, CIC service learning curriculum is spiral in nature. Classroom knowledge and community learning inform each other.   We outline the sessions of "A healthy and wealthy lives and lifestyles for senior citizens" in the below paragraphs to show the spiral and dialogical nature of CIC.

In the first two sessions, teachers as a community learners shared their understanding of the issue with the students in the form of classroom teaching. They, as problem-posers, at the same time facilitate students to formulate, from their experiences, to articulate their initial understanding of the issue.   These first two sessions are education *about* the community. Followed with these is two sessions of community learning. Students learn from direct interactions with senior citizens, who

we mapped out in the community investigation, in the communities. The dialogues among students and senior citizens are in the areas of their shared concern, which is, in this case, healthy lifestyle and senior citizens, is a process of education *for* the community. Students validate their previous understanding *about* the community and expand their learning *for* the community. While they are working together, care and empathetic understanding are developed. Subsequent sessions are structured with this interlacing, spiral and dialogical format.

Before going on with the curriculum, we would like to add one more point here. These seniors come from everywhere from the community. Some of them are living alone. Some of them are living in the elderly homes. Some of them are taking care by health professions. We reached them at the places where they live, the places they work or come across them at street corners, community gardens or markets. Each of them represents different socio-economic background or different styles of living and lives, that constitutes part of the whole picture of senior citizens in the community. Students, in these exercises, can immerse into different parts of elderly lives and livings, in the sense that original fixated understanding of elderly people, such as "weak" and "useless", has been moved. We consider that it is the initiation of the conscienization process (Yu, 2005). Interestingly, in this exercise, some students showed enthusiasm to meet some more elderly people. Some of them were then referred by the elderly people to see their friends and relatives. Some of them interviewed their grandparents. We can understand these situations in two levels: (1) "Curriculum capital" reproduces itself, through the social capital of students and elderly people; (2) powerful issue can induce learning motivation and attracts people

together (Odgen & Claus, 1999; Yu, 2005). Another key point we note is that when we involve students and elderly people in the alliance of "curriculum participants", new "curriculum capital" evolves, learning activity generates itself. It is a very common experience we have in our projects. It happens also in community services and we will describe it at the part "Community service C" below.

Community service A: dialogue with critical understanding. In the latter part of these sessions, students learn the discipline knowledge. In this case, it is the healthy eating. Our curriculum, at that moment, is targeted to facilitate students to integrate discipline knowledge and community understanding in the formulation of community services, i.e., the process of education *in / through* the community. The subject knowledge, home economic, is a static knowledge. In Hong Kong, it employs western ideas of cooking and eating, which is not relevant to local Chinese elderly people. Having learnt the home economic knowledge, a group of students, for example, learn from elderly people how to make Chinese cakes and puddings. The students then develop low sugar Chinese pudding recipes. Promote it to elderly people and teach them to cook are their community services. Students learn the discipline knowledge, distill the principles, evoke and engage in another round of dialogue with elderly people and formulate collaborative action. This forms another integral spiral cycle of CIC. Though it is a simple community services, it has its critical meaning. In this service learning project, power position of discipline knowledge and the social conditions of elderly people are brought into concern by the students, and reconsidered by them. Students then act as change agent, induce changes in the community. More importantly, as understanding and collaborative

working are the key elements in this course of action, it is noted that care, empowerment, mutuality and reciprocity are inherently addressed.

Community service B: initiate another level of social changes. The other team of students approached "A healthy and wealthy lives and lifestyles for senior citizens" in another way. In their community learning activities, community investigation at the community gardens, they discovered the chairs and benches at the community gardens are not used by the elderly people there. The elderly people preferred to sit on floor or at the flower pots. Some even brought their own stools. Students engaged in subsequent dialogues with these elderly people to find out what are the problems of those chairs and benches. Students targeted their services to promote changes in community gardens for the elderly people so that they could enjoy their leisure there. They then consolidated a problem list of these chairs and benches. They integrated it into the Design and Technology knowledge and designed several models of new community furniture, which are user-friendly for the elderly people. Students and elderly people studied these models and put forward their preferred designs to the councilors and officials. Students are empowered in this community services.

Community service C: process of capital transformation. The third team approached "A healthy and wealthy lives and lifestyles for senior citizens" with the theme of "promoting intergenerational solidity in community". They developed the following community service. Students learnt Baduanjin (八段錦), which is one of the most common forms of Chinese qigong (氣功), from the senior citizens. They convinced their Physical Education teacher to open the school mini-

golf field for them to teach senior citizens mini-golf. After that, they gained the support from their Chinese teacher in having some senior citizens to sit in their Chinese lessons, followed by that is the Chinese History lessons. This service is interesting. The community service is initially an intergenerational exchange between students and senior citizens, i.e. the reciprocal learning of Baduanjin and mini-golf. Because the students and elderly people are motivated by this powerful issue, they both invest; the message of intergenerational solidity is spreading over other students and teachers. In CIC notion, students and their learning has connected to the broader community. They are empowered when they develop and mobilize capitals. Besides, it is also interesting to note the school becomes more ready to open up its resources for the community. In capital terms, it represents several capital formation and transformation. Students, as "curriculum participants", identify school physical environment and people as resources for the community, turn them into "curriculum capital". When the message is spreading over, the "curriculum capital" reproduces itself. School realizes the "curriculum capital" and accumulates it as "community capital" by opening up the school resources to public, in which this "community capital" is ready to be used in the coming curricula. This is a small example, but the meaning is clear. In this notion, students, teachers, schools and the "broader community" are involved in developing lasting curricula, as well as in community building.

One step forward: connect to broader community. Though leisure, healthy eating, intergenerational solidity are powerful issues for community services, we hope our students shall attend the issue in a larger social context. Connecting learning in the school and community with the larger community is an educative process for students (Arther, 2000; Codispoti, 2004; Hargreaves, 1982; Yu, 2002, 2005). The discipline of EPA knowledge informs students with knowledge about social lives and social theories. It helps students to reflect on their experiences in community services to examine the existing social services for elderly in promoting health. In this project, teachers pose the question: "how social policies relate to golden old ages". They conducted another community investigation and going through the similar CIC cycle, some students gradually formulated their views on public policies, such as the old ages allowance, retirement fund and medical care for elderly.

Community services. We have just gone through briefly how community services respond to important issues of critical understanding, initiate social change, capital transformation and connection to broader community. Of course, we are not suggesting that these issues are responded one by one in each community service, the process is spiral and dialogical. Our presentation in this manner is just for the ease of reading. Before going to the conclusion, we would like to make remarks about community services in the following paragraph.

As we have seen in the above examples, community services in CIC is not a preset activity in the curriculum, it is a product of dialogues among "curriculum participants", as well as a collaborative action developed by them gears to certain forms of community building or transformative social changes. In these examples, when community service emerges in the flow of the curriculum, the role of elderly people changes at the same time. They are not only elderly people being served,

but also senior citizens actively contribute. They have dual role. If we consider it as the agenda of empowerment, elderly people are empowered in the CIC process of education *in /through* the community (engaging) together with the students. Thus, CIC service learning is inherently empowering for both the students and elderly people. So, the question is how could make it happen easily? From our projects experiences, we reaffirmed these two key factors: social capital and powerful issue. Social capital is the fabrics of human relationship which bring people together (Putnam, Leonardi & Nanetti, 1993) and powerful issue provide direction to change. It returns to our earlier discussion that it is important to set off the service learning project with in-depth community investigation, and then target the project to the caring of people, in our case, lives and living experiences of elderly people in the community. This could nurture social capital (Yu, 2005). Thirdly, we put forward a powerful issue, in our case, healthy and wealthy lifestyles for elderly people, for the students to study and work on with the elderly people. We believe these preparations could facilitate meaningful community service to emerge.

Conclusion - classroom in community: Serving the Elderly People, Learning from Senior Citizens

In this paper, we have tentatively proposed the concept of "Classroom in community" to service learning, and illustrated with examples of service learning curriculum and community services derived by us with local secondary schools. We have argued that "Classroom in community" is a community-based curriculum that connects school, students and community together to achieve social goods or induce social changes. "Classroom in community"

is inherently empowering, which affirms mutuality, collaboration, empathy and care. It asserts students as change agent. In "classroom in community", learning is student centered. It is a holistic and situated learning. With these characteristics, we propose that "Classroom in community" can be the sustained service learning curricula in the community. While literatures in service learning (e.g. Codispoti, 2004; Odgen & Claus, 1999; Vickers et al., 2004; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2000; Werner et al., 2002) provide us with principles of good practices in service learning, "Classroom in community" suggests the details of the process, dynamics and mechanism of how these principles work. Among various things, powerful issue and social capital are two of the key factors we have identified. We have mentioned several examples of intergeneration community services in this paper. We believe that while "Classroom in community" is employed, cultural and powerful issues are addressed in the process. We observed that students are working collaboratively and happily with elderly people, both serve and both learn. To sum up, CIC to service learning is a way to facilitate students to initiate community services through collective dialogues with the community, in our cases, to get connected with their community by serving the elderly people and learning from them as senior citizens.

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