

Research-related Knowledge Transfer Initiative – Bridging Research and Social Service with RR2

CYEP, a service-learning project that started in 2005 for Hall residents under the guide and vision of project convener Dr. Elaine AU, has served as the cornerstone for service-learning projects and initiatives in CityU for almost ten years now. Service-learning, a community-engagement pedagogy that integrates academic learning goals and the needs of the community in a way to benefit both the student volunteers and the service-recipients, has since become a homestay term for the thousands of volunteers and partner organizations of CYEP. Built on social work values and the concept of service-learning, CYEP has since grown from its humble inception to engage and involve students from the entire campus, irrespective of majors or backgrounds, with regular and one-off services, and local and international services.

Yet, CYEP, as it turns the page past its 10th anniversary, faces new challenges and opportunities. As the researcher-practitioner model becomes an increasingly common model for nurturing students in the helping professions, CYEP has recognized the need to expose and train its service volunteers in research-related skills. At present, all of the services held by CYEP focus on direct service with the service recipients and are not research-intensive. This will not only be helpful for students of SS but also, as CYEP accepts students from all majors, for students majoring in non-SS disciplines, where the practice of research may be alien to them. If CYEP is to commit to its service-learning goals and the needs of the community, then the necessity of linking academic study to practical real-life situations under the framework of a researcher-practitioner model for the benefit of the community, through research and pragmatic endeavors, become evident. Service-learning should not only be understood and appreciated through active practice, but also by consulting the growing body of research literature.

It is under this light of necessity and opportunity that the CYEP service RR2, abbreviation for 'Research-Related 2', the second research-related service conducted by CYEP, was born. RR2 is the first research-related regular service dedicated to cultivating the 'researcher' within each service-volunteer. RR2 does this by promoting the academic aspect of service-learning, i.e. academic literature covering service-learning and service-learning within the broader scope of literature on Social Science and Education, teaching pertinent research techniques, and facilitating service volunteers to build bridges and connections that help them see the intrinsic value of research in complementing social services and community-engagement activities. The anticipated outcomes of such service would indeed be widespread and constructive, especially given that majority of CYEP volunteers do not hail from the SS department. Service volunteers themselves would be able to gain valuable research skills, increase their understanding of service-learning and volunteerism, be more aware of the macro and micro forces that influence the social fabric of society, and acquire a broadened view on life that will be helpful for their personal growth. The anticipated outcomes from the service also extend to the service-recipients as they benefit from service volunteers' use of both research-informed skills and direct-practice skills to meet their needs. With SS and non-SS students developing their research skills, mindset,



and commitment to helping others through RR2, CYEP's impact in the community would undoubtedly be much greater.

In Semester B 2015, after a rigorous selection process, RR2 launched with 41 CYEP volunteers; two-thirds of which were from SS. During the 13-week service, RR2 volunteers were separated into six groups, each focusing on a core element of Service-Learning such as Personal Identity or Problem-Solving Skills, and trained on the techniques of conducting Social Research and were given a brief introduction to Service-Learning. The service was designed around a scaffolding approach that placed the student in the center of his/her learning and the trainers on the side, guiding their development and understanding until the students were able to take ownership of the design of a research-informed 'service-learning debriefing' project. The intention of the project was to help Project Officers of CYEP integrate core values of Service-Learning into their service debriefings. Throughout the semester, the RR2 volunteers served more than 340 hours and, through the aforementioned project, facilitated the learning of over 350 CYEP volunteers.

During the service, students were presented with a number of opportunities to practice and gain new research skills. For example, most recently, with the support of the Knowledge Transfer Initiative, a select

few service volunteers of RR2 will attend and present at two academic conferences on Service-learning in Taiwan from May to June. The students will get the opportunity to present their research findings, learn from world-renowned scholars in Service-learning, share the RR2 project with others, and understand more about service-learning by experiencing the service-learning practice of Taiwan. This trip is meant to help promote and enrich their learning experience of social research methods and service-learning as well as broaden their view of volunteerism and community-engagement for the benefit of our service volunteers, service recipients, and CYEP as a whole.

Moving forward, it is hoped that RR2, as a regular volunteer service of CYEP, will continue to serve the learning needs of the stakeholders by providing research-related training and advocating for the practice of social research in the community.



Message from Head

To implement the mission of knowledge transfer of CityU, we have actively engaged stakeholders to launched knowledge transfer activities. Our department and the Department of Sociology of CUHK co-organized the 7th Annual Conference of the Asian Criminological Society, with the theme "Criminology and Criminal Justice in a Changing World: Contributions from Asia", attended by 300 participants from 26 countries. Providing a platform for scholars and practitioners in both Asia and the world to engage in scholarly and professional exchange, it has stimulated a great deal of theoretical and empirical interests in the Asian criminology circle.

The Life Mentor Scheme was granted by UGC to Professor Alice Chong for winning the prestigious '2013 UGC Teaching Award'. Students from HKU, CUHK, PolyU and CityU were matched with elders on a 2:1 basis and conducted inter-generational exchange outside classroom. A creative life-story book was designed by each pair of students for their life mentor. A forum on the "Life Mentor Scheme for Generation Me – a Cross-University Collaboration for Student Excellence in An Ageing Society" was held to disseminate good practice of the Scheme. An operational manual was distributed to higher education institutes, secondary schools and NGOs after the forum.

The International Conference on Discovery and Innovation in Social Work Practicum Education, co-organized by CityU, HKU and CUHK, was supported by the UGC Teaching and Learning Related Initiatives Funding Scheme. It facilitated the exchange of knowledge and practices related to the issues and trends of practicum education in the local and global contexts. About 200 social work practitioners, educators, and students from different parts of the world participated in the conference.

Co-organized with the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, our department held a seminar on Triad Society and Outreach Social Work, attended by 130 social workers from 12 welfare agencies. Since many participants commented the event as constructive, meaningful and enlightening, we decided to make the "Outreach Social Work Forum" as an annual event.

The Professional Exchange Seminar on Narrative Therapy: Theory & Practice attracted over 150 participants from the social service sectors, medical and rehabilitation social workers, and educational and religious organizations. A book, *Narrating Faith, Love and Hope*, was shared with participants to illustrate the effectiveness and applications of narrative therapy to help patients of chronic illness.

Two faculty members were awarded the UGC Knowledge Transfer Earmarked Fund with the following projects – Empowering Student, Empowering Community – Bi-directional Knowledge Transfer to Promote the Understanding

on Social Issues (Dr Elaine Au) and Responding to Hardships with Strengths: Train the Trainer Narrative Therapy in Action (Dr Esther Chow). The awards confirm SS's continued commitment in knowledge transfer. Equally, our faculty members' research is recognized locally and internationally. Dr Esther Chow was awarded the Gerontological Society of America Fellowship. Dr Bonnie Chow was awarded the CLASS New Researcher Award for her outstanding research in psychology. Professor Wing Lo was invited by the US Department of Defence to speak in the Foreign Affairs Officers Seminar in Arlington, Virginia.

Our students' achievements are also encouraging. Two psychology students, Ma Wai Shan and Yan Ying Fong, were awarded the Chow Sang Sang Group CityU-Columbia Joint Bachelor's Degree Program Need Based Scholarships. The scholarship supports outstanding CityU students to complete two years of degree studies at Columbia University in New York. We were also happy to see four students winning the CLASS Discovery-enriched Curriculum (DEC) Awards 2015. Psychology student, Lau Shing Fung, was the Undergraduate Individual Champion. Her project was "From eyes to eyes: an application of the eye-tracking laboratory". Social work student, Lam Hau Yin, was the Undergraduate Individual Runner-up. She developed a social work practice protocol in working with a person with mental illness. Applied Sociology/Criminology students, Chan Ka Kei and Cheung Chun Pong, were the Undergraduate Group Runner-up. They designed a Mobile Phone Game - Pet Ba Ma.

Prof Wing Lo
Head
Department of Applied Social Sciences



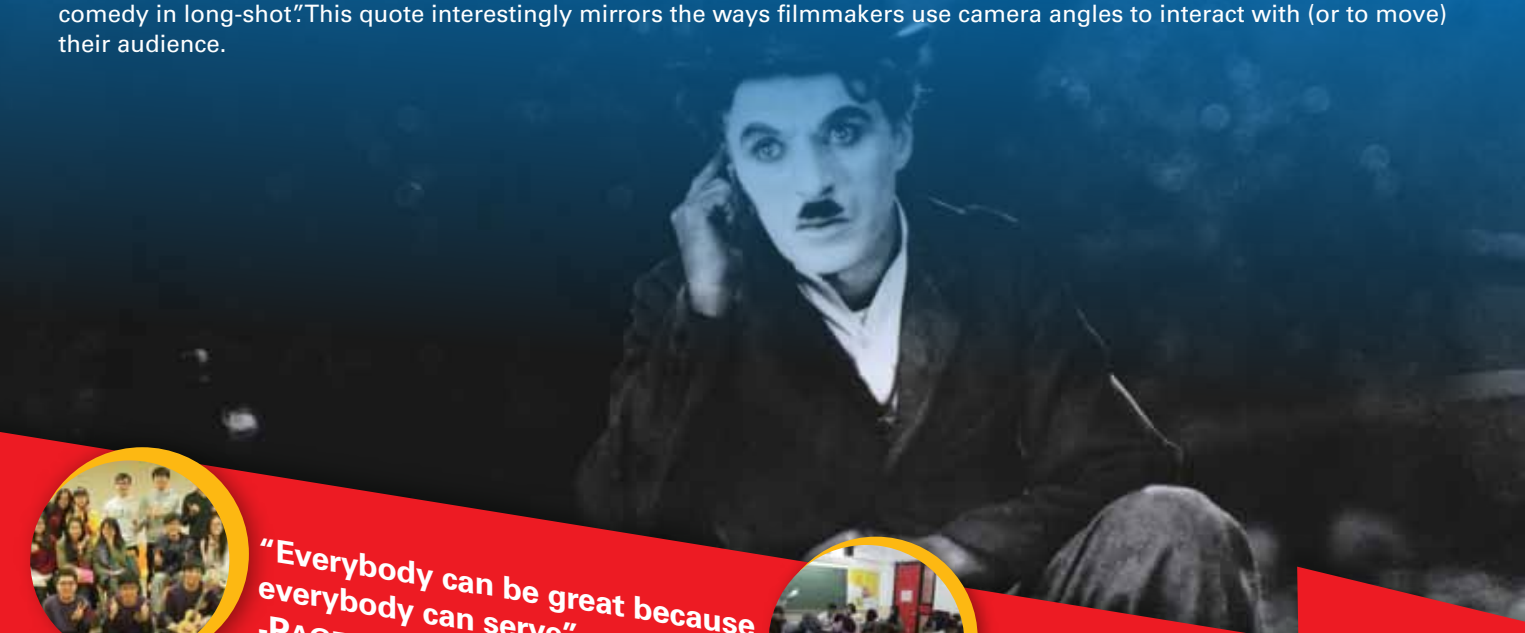
Department of Applied Social Sciences Serves the Society

19 Issue July 2015

Movies: Moving Pictures Moving You

The word "movie" was created by combining the words "moving" and "picture". Indeed, what we see in cinema is essentially a projection of a sequence of static pictures on the screen. The pictures are presented rapid enough (less than 1/20 second per frame) to fool our eyes and our mind to believe that the people or objects on the screen are moving as if they are in reality. As the saying goes "a picture is worth a thousand words", a typical movie is literally worth several hundred thousands of words. The breadth and depth of the messages embedded in a movie can hence be so rich that leave significant impact on our lives. Together with painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, dancing, and play, movie constitutes one of the eight major art forms of mankind. Like many art products, movies are created by human, portraying human actions, and being perceived by human audience. As such, film scholars or psychologists have long been interested in how movies and human minds interact.

Charlie Chaplin, a famous English comedian and filmmaker, has once said "life is a tragedy when seen in close-up, but a comedy in long-shot". This quote interestingly mirrors the ways filmmakers use camera angles to interact with (or to move) their audience.



"Everybody can be great because everybody can serve" -PAGE 3-4



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SS² on-line : <http://www.cityu.edu.hk/ss/newsletter>

Editorial Board: Dr. Tina Rochelle, Ms. Katy Liu
Department of Applied Social Sciences, City University of Hong Kong Tat Chee Avenue, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon.
Tel: 3442 8991 Fax: 3442 0283 Email: ssgo@cityu.edu.hk

MOVIES: MOVING PICTURES MOVING YOU

For instance, long-shots are usually used for scenes depicting joyful or enlightening moods (like the Indian comedy drama “3 Idiots (2009)”) to maintain objectivity, whereas close-ups are more frequently used when a character is experiencing intense emotional turmoil (like Rutger Hauer in the last scene of “Blade Runner (1982)”). By using close-ups, the audience is brought closer to the internal states of the character and more readily to experience the complex feelings within the character (which is the goal of many directors!).

When we talk about the interaction between movies and human mind, some scholars have drawn an analogy between movie watching and dreaming. In his book “The power of movies: How screen and mind interact”, Colin McGinn (2007) proposed several arguments for the claim that watching a movie is similar to dreaming which is the very reason why people are so attracted to movies ever since movies were invented at the beginning of the last century. For instances, people generally prefer watching a movie in the evening (instead of during daytime), the time of the day when most people are going to sleep and having dreams. Also, the dreaming experience for many is largely visual (seeing colors in dreams is more often than seeing only black and white images for many people) and auditory (including speech and music) oriented, whereas it is relatively rare for us to experience senses like tastes or smells in our dreams. The same holds for the case of watching a movie which is almost exclusively a visual and auditory based experience (just forget about the popcorns or cokes you might have in your hands for a second). In addition, a commercial feature-length movie is generally about two hours long. Interestingly, the duration of our sleeping time when most of our dreams occur (i.e., the stage of sleep where rapid eye movements are evident, also known as the REM sleep) is approximately two hours per night! This is probably why the length of a typical commercial movie is close to two hours. Furthermore, like dreams, movies can expand our horizon by allowing us to experience and explore things out of the realm of our everyday life. According to McGinn, our dreaming experience shapes our taste for the movies we are after.

Although scientists still don't know sure why we dream, one well received proposal is that dreaming is related to memory consolidation and information organization. In other words, dreaming might be related to learning and personal growth, which is probably why infants and young kids spend much more time for REM sleeps relative to adults. Furthermore, dreaming can be associated with the processing

of emotional experiences as people who are experiencing emotionally significant life events generally show an increase in the amount of REM sleep. If that is the case that our preference for movies is rooted in our dreaming experiences, as argued by McGinn (2007), movies might well be a promising venue for learning, emotion regulation, and personal growth.

Movie not only interacts with us individually, it also encourages us to be social. For instance, movies can be more enjoyable when watched with others, as suggested by the findings of psychological research. It has been shown that participants rated comedies much funnier and more pleasurable when they comprehended the comedies in a crowded room, relative to the condition where they comprehended the same comedies in a less dense room (Aielli, Thompson, & Brodzinsky, 1983). So for those who just wanted to go to the cinema for some fun and entertainment, a good piece of advice would be to choose a popular movie theater and to go there during peak hours (just try to guarantee a fuller house), a way to maximize one can get from the movie ticket!

Movies interact with us in many aspects: perceptual, emotional, and social. Go share some good ones with your friends or family during your leisure. Let your eyes be fooled and your heart be moved, perhaps you will find something meaningful for your life. Enjoy!

Dr. Andus Wing-Kuen Wong,
Assistant Professor of Psychology,
Department of Applied Social Sciences,
City University of Hong Kong



Introduction of Differential Item Functioning Assessment

Tests and questionnaires are commonly used to understand human abilities, behaviors, and attitudes, and responses to test items are further compared to examine differences among groups. For instance, in past decades the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) has surveyed the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old students from more than 70 cities to evaluate five education systems and collected students' and their principals' responses to understand and compare students' learning environment all over the world. A major concern in such comparisons is whether or not the test questions are on the same ruler across different groups (e.g., countries), termed as measurement invariance. When scores simply reflect participants' underlying competency (e.g., math ability) or tendencies (e.g., attitude toward math) measurement invariance is upheld and performances on the test are comparable. In other word, if participants of different groups have the same latent abilities but show quite a different performance on tests, the assumption of measurement invariance is violated and the test might favor one group but disfavor others. Such tests are deemed unfair and discrepancies among groups cannot be interpreted as “true” differences.

To ensure measurement fairness and equality across groups before comparisons are made, differential item functioning (DIF) assessments have been widely used for this purpose. DIF assessments examine responses to each item to see if participants from different groups perform differently even when they have the same levels of ability. Take test formats as an example. Male students usually perform better on multiple-choice questions in reading and math tests, whereas females excel on constructed-response questions, even when both groups have the same level of reading and math ability. Thus, once test formats change, conclusions regarding gender differences change dramatically. These changes are irrespective of the participants' ability levels but related to their gender. Test scores are not comparable and misinformed decisions will be made.

A DIF analysis should strive for two major DIF patterns, uniform and nonuniform DIF. Uniform DIF refers to the influence of group membership on item difficulty, implying that one group of participants consistently obtain a higher score on a test question (because the item is easier for them) than another group even though they have the same levels of ability. Nonuniform DIF indicates the impact from the interaction between latent trait and group membership. For instance, the item might be more difficult for participants in group A with low ability but easier for the same group with high ability. Simultaneously, this item is more difficult for participants in group B with high ability but becomes easier for group B with low ability. Thus, the differences

in probabilities of endorsing an item or accurately answering an item for two groups are not consistent across the whole space of latent ability.

Numerous statistical techniques have been proposed in DIF assessments, and the Mantel-Haenszel (M-H) method and the logistic regression (LR) procedure are the two of most popular approaches. When groups have equal mean abilities and items are dichotomous (e.g., yes/no), the two approaches are powerful for detecting uniform DIF, and LR excels at nonuniform DIF detection. The two procedures do not have strict requirements for data distribution and large sample sizes, demonstrate computational simplicity, and can be easily implemented in commercial software (e.g., SPSS, SAS, and STATA) or free software (e.g., R) without extra efforts or knowledge. They have been implemented to examine gender DIF in reading and mathematics tests or investigate items to assess attitude toward social goals using the grouping membership of the teacher and the student.

Item response theory (IRT) (so called modern test theory) approach is another popular approach for detecting DIF items. This approach shows very similar performance as the LR procedure, and outperforms the LR approach when the means of group ability differ (e.g., the average performance of the boy group on the science test is better than the average one of the girl group). However, IRT approach requires large sample sizes (e.g. hundreds or more) in order to yield accurate results and users need to have advanced statistical skills and obtain special training to use specific software (e.g., ConQuest, IRTPRO, and Winsteps). Also, this approach usually takes longer time to complete all computations, compared to the MH or the LR.

DIF assessment is not only a routine practice in large-scale program assessments (e.g., the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), but also a developing, popular topic in the academia (e.g., nearly 1,700 articles investigating DIF issues in the PsylInfo database, and around 500 of them published before 2009). Future studies should continue examining the performance of existing DIF approaches under different conditions such as mixed-worded test design which includes both positive- and negative-worded items in a test, participants who show tendencies to choose extreme response categories (e.g., only choosing “strongly agree”) or middle points (e.g., neutral), or rating or Likert scales used in a test. Also, researchers are suggested developing user-friendly, free software for public use.

Dr. CHEN, Hui Fang
Assistant Professor of Psychology,
Department of Applied Social Sciences,
City University of Hong Kong



“EVERYBODY CAN BE GREAT BECAUSE EVERYBODY CAN SERVE” BY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The learning paradigm of today's higher education not merely requires students to listen or adopt knowledge from traditional pedagogies, such as classroom instruction. Instead, students are encouraged to apply knowledge into real life situation, so as to make impact to the community. The United States was the pioneer to develop such concept under the field of volunteerism and civic engagement, soon then this idea has been coined as “Service Learning” since 1970s. The common understanding of service learning is to integrate service as one of the teaching and learning strategies into curriculum.

When Project X was launched in 2008, the team also identified the importance of such teaching strategy on social science studies. Beyond studying classic theories from books and journals, additional co-curricular activities could be the platform for SS students to explore social phenomena and gained hands on experiences from various settings in the community. Thus, the team facilitated SS students to organize Community Awareness Exploration (CAE) activities during their first year of university learning. Currently, due to the reform in university education, students are granted more time and opportunities to explore societal issues during four years of university study. The CAE was also transformed to a structured programme and termed as Community Awareness Project (CAP). Different from usual volunteer or extra-curricular activities, CAP is non-credit bearing, student-initiated as well as cross-disciplinary. The core target participants are those who are newly admitted to SS as home-major department, i.e. sophomore (Year 2) and senior entrants (Year 3).

There are two distinctive projects organized across in year 2014-2015.

1. Music, Play and Life - Community Art Project (Playback Theatre)

To increase students' community awareness towards youth with mental health problems and integrate professional learning into real life practice, a group of 18 SS students and alumni from psychology and social work majors participated in a community awareness project (CAP) entitled “Music, Play and Life - Community Art Project”. It is a student-initiated project co-organized with Stewards Hong Kong focusing on Playback Theatre. Students got the chance to attend over 30 hours of professional training on Playback Theatre in Semester A, and then integrate what they have learnt into practice through performance



mental health problems through Playback Theatre, and promote a positive image and mental health in the community. Below are the sharing from some of the participants.

KWOK WaiTeng, Jerome (BSS2-PSY, Cohort 2014)

The experience in being a part of the playback training is extremely fruitful for me in many aspects. First, we have learnt many forms of playback which enable us to know more how we can perform in front of the audience. Second, this learning process also fostered our group's relationship and the sense of a team as well, which consequently enhance our performance better on stage. Third, playback training led me undergo a self-understanding and improving change to build up my self-confidence because the chances to share and watch teammates acting on different stories can help myself to ponder more on myself and thence receive a message to move on, and a step further is that I can be more capable in the true meaning of tellers' thought and encourage them, which is of utmost importance in my mind. Therefore, I am really grateful in joining this project and would like to say thanks to all who taught and facilitated me.

LAW Kin Lok, Roger (BSS4-SW, Cohort 2013)

After joining the CAP, I have valued the essence of sharing my own story more than before. The concepts of narrative therapy have been greatly used in the playback theater. “Distancing” which is a core skill being used in the theater, as the performer is intended to provide clients with an opportunity to view their own story in a third-person angle. By distancing one self's from its own story, individual can see the story in much wider perspectives. Clients can often gain insights from the performance, which facilitate them to solve their problems. I have learnt to apply this concept – “distancing” in my daily lives, in which by sharing my own story with others. Others' responses or recapitulation can often give me insights to view my difficulty and hardship in a new way that I have not never think before.

TANG Po Yin, Tiffany (BSS2-SW, cohort 2014)

Playback is a wonderful way to view one's story. There's people who listen to your story, then act out the part which is impressed by you and give you a chance to tell and review your story. Here, we share joy; and here, we also carry tears. I listen to different people's stories, and experience their journeys. It's like I am the one who experience all those things and become the participants from one story to another story. Seeing participants who are willing to trust us and share their stories. Ultimately, as performers, we know that audience like our playback performances. I enjoy the moment that we devoted in playback sessions. Times fly. When doing playback, I hope it would be last longer each time. I desperately wish to listen all stories from audiences which allowed them to feel the magic of playback personally. Not only participants could gain memories, for us, we also learn to

listen others, to pay attention to things that I may neglect in my own life. Finally, I appreciate the uniqueness of each person.

2. Serving Children with Special Education Needs.

The project aimed at enhancing students' understanding to the SEN children. In addition, they would have an opportunity to sharpen their leadership competence, such as programme planning and presentation skills. A briefing session, 8-hour professional training conducted by an occupational therapist, 6 session weekly group meeting with 8 aged between 4 and 6 kindergartens, and a mass event on university visit with 20 primary students were held under this project. Through the activities, 18 university students who commonly major in psychology and social work programme took a leader role to conduct some sessions. They could explore the interaction of individuals and environment, and facilitate those children with better social skills. Furthermore, students could gain experience in community work. Below are the sharing from our agency project coordinator and one of our participants.

Ho Ching Chi, Maria (Registered Social Worker, Alumnus, BSSSW, cohort 2010)

This was my second time cooperating with Project X to coordinate the Community Awareness Project. As an alumnus, I felt a strong sense of belonging that I can continue my connection with the warm community of SS Department. It was a pleasure and valuable experience for me to share my working experience with the students and work with them. This theme of this year was “Children with Special Educational Needs”. Participants' efforts in preparing the group sessions and mass program are greatly appreciated, despite the time constraint and not much experience in program planning. I was moved by their patience, tolerance and understanding to the children. They surely add colors to the project and enrich each other's fruitful learning results. Children with SEN are one of the service targets that have increasing service demand these few years, no matter at school setting or NGO setting. I believe that Community Awareness Project offers students a platform to test out different possibilities and equip themselves with more useful knowledge and skills for their career development and enhance their employability. I hope the participants have become more confident in working with children and can apply what they experienced into real practice in the future. Special thanks have to be given to Project X staff for their coordination and support.

Cheng Chi Chung, Mickey (BSS4-PSY, cohort 2013)

“Learning should not be confined in classrooms” that is the reason for organizing Community Awareness Project (CAP) – to provide students non-academic acquaintance through community services. This year, I participated in one of the two meaningful programmes, which was serving kindergarten children with Special Education Need (SEN). SEN children, with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in particular, are often labeled

as ‘problematic’ or ‘extremely naughty’. There is no doubt that sometimes they misbehave or act in intangible ways. As long as we slightly alter our coping strategies, such as creating some reinforcers to consolidate their proper behaviors or using games or role-playing to instill social norms into them, SEN children can actually perform as excellent as normal children.

Throughout the project, I not only formed close bonding with those kids, but also was equipped with general skills to deal with SEN children, which provided me with insights on future career. In general, this is one of the most fruitful and memorable experiences I have ever had in CityU. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to SS department, our supervisors from Project X, as well as the staff from the agency, and the trainer whom is an occupational therapist and my class fellows for their remarkable contribution.

MK (Social Work Alumni, 2012)

A total of 18 students from Project X received 21 hours training organized by Stewards Life Education Project. After that, they had graduation performance with the topics “Hopes” and “Travel”. Besides, they performed in Chiang Chen Studio Theatre for the audience who watched a show performed by teenagers with mental illness on 31-1-2015. It is an innovative way to use Playback Theatre as a platform to let the audience become outsider-witness group*. In the show, the story tellers shared their impression, what the teenagers' images are and how this impression connected with their lives. This was an unforgettable experience as we felt life influences life.

Being an alumni and agency staff, it was touching for me to conduct this training as students, came from different cohorts and majors, developed the feeling of cooperation, togetherness and built up a safe place in which we listened to, accepted and reflected our stories, displaying total respect and without passing judgment. Hence, we could freely share our happiness, sadness, fear, growth, hopes and dreams..... I was also touched by the students' enthusiasm in forming the troupe to serve the public even though the project ended. All these recalled my memory about joining CAP with different cohorts and majors, my enthusiasm towards Playback Theatre and my university life. Once again, I felt life influences life. At last, I hope that students will keep on believing in life influences life and make use what they learnt to explore their own stories, others' stories and our society's stories.* Playback theatre is an interactive and improvisational theater. The conductor invites the audience to share their own stories, then the actors and musician will make use their body, limbs, emotions, voices and music to perform the stories.

