



# **“Classroom in community: Serving the Elderly People, Learning from Senior Citizens”**

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**A Communitarian Approach to  
community-based Service Learning for  
Secondary School students in Hong Kong**

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# **“Classroom in community” ? (CIC)**

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1 Observation + 1 background

➔ **“Classroom in community”**

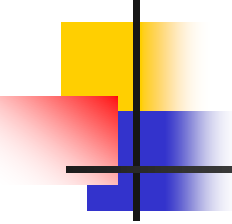


# An Observation:

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S-L projects in HK secondary schools

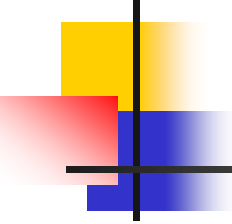
- are mainly developed based on charity model
- it involves serving elderly people living in the elderly homes distant from the school community
- activities is mainly one-shot. Held outside the regular school hours.



# Weaknesses of these projects as revealed by teachers

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- Students are “feeling good” after serving the elderly, but their reflections are “superficial”.
- Students and elderly people interact, but chances for them to work together are limited. Mutuality is seldom developed.
- the linkage between curriculum and the community services is not strong. Service part is “weak”. It could not arouse social concerns.



# Weaknesses of these projects as revealed by teachers (2)

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- non-school hours at distant community is not favorable for school arrangement, students' learning and engagement.
- It incurs additional costs for transportation
- It discourages teachers' participation
- It discourages students' motivation to learn and to serve.



# So..... educators may ask?

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- Where is the **SERVICES** in these service learning projects?

- Where is the **LEARNING** in these service learning projects?



# My background

- Social workers
  - Working with *Youth*
  - Working with *Schools*
  - In a local *community*

*The question for me is.....*



Where is the **COMMUNITY** in these Community Services ?



# Classroom in community (CIC)

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- Proposed by Professor YU An-bong (余安邦)
- Two books (in Chinese)
  - Classroom in Community: The Interplay and Dialogue between School Curriculum and Holistic Community Development (2002)  
(社區有教室)
  - When School Curriculum Encounters Local Culture: A Critical Praxis of “Classroom in Community” (2005)  
(社區有教室的批判性實踐)





# “Classroom in community” (CIC)

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- CIC is not only an approach to connect students, their learning and the community.
- CIC is a pedagogical praxis to achieve holistic community building
- it also realizes students' potential to become change agents of transformative social movement.



# CIC believes....

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- school is one of the constituting parts of the community.
- The meaning of classroom should be extended to all implicit, explicit and hidden learning situations
- Curriculum refers to all formal, informal and hidden knowledge, tradition and cultural transmissions.
- Curriculum constitutes part of the community activities and culture, which is non-linear, fluid and dynamic in nature.



# Outlines of my presentation:

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- Introduce the principles of CIC
- Show how to employ **CIC in the development service learning curriculum**
- Illustrate with **examples of community services**
- Concluding remarks



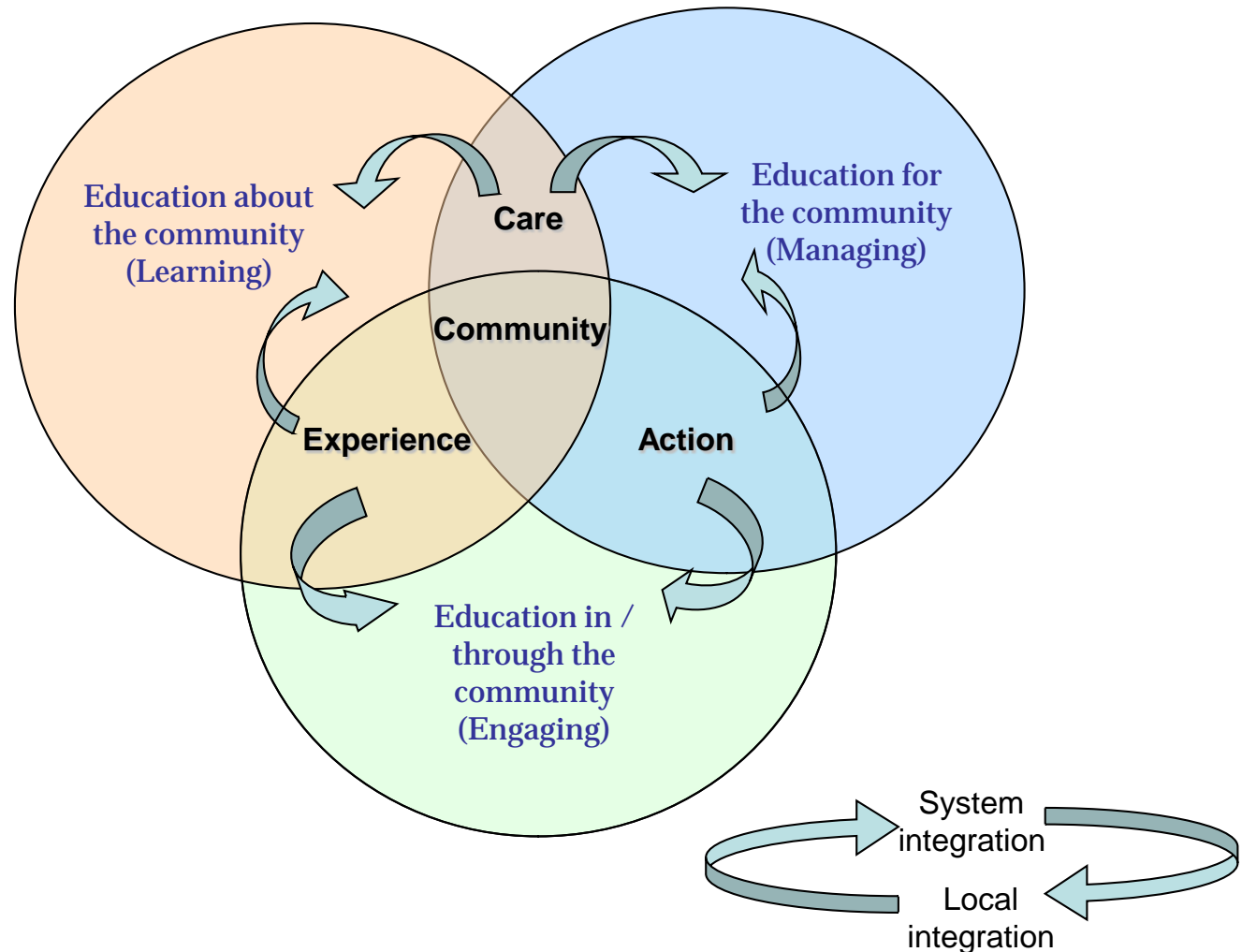
# 3 principles of CIC

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- The Education Cycle of CIC
  - *Connecting school and the community*
- Teachers as community learners and problem-posers
  - *Connecting teachers and the community*
- “Community Capital” & “Curriculum capital”
  - *Connecting curricula and the community*

# The Education Cycle of CIC

*Connecting school and the community*



Teachers as community learner and  
problem-posers

*Connecting teachers and the community*

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students, teachers, school  
and the community are the

Curriculum participants,  
contributors and users  
of curriculum.

# Teachers as learners in community



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- *teachers are learners of the community* → can use Community resources in teaching
- implies teachers are moving from *“teaching knowledge for”* the community to *“realizing knowledge with”* the community.
- teachers engage *continuously in the collective dialogues with “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

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- While culture, tradition and mutuality are key elements to community building, 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*
- Critical praxis of CIC





# Teachers as problem posers

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- to generate critical, relevant and motivating questions for and with “curriculum participants”
- Questions of these kinds provide the necessary momentum and tension for the “curriculum participants” to work together.
- discover new knowledge towards the power structures to the existing social arrangements and conditions
- then try to answer the questions.



# “Community Capital” & “Curriculum capital”

## *Connecting curricula and the community*

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### “Community Capital”

- *economic capital (including both property and human capital),*
- *cultural capital,*
- *social capital*
- *environmental capital*

“Curriculum capital”: *“Community Capital” that is available for curriculum development*

# “Community Capital” & “Curriculum capital”

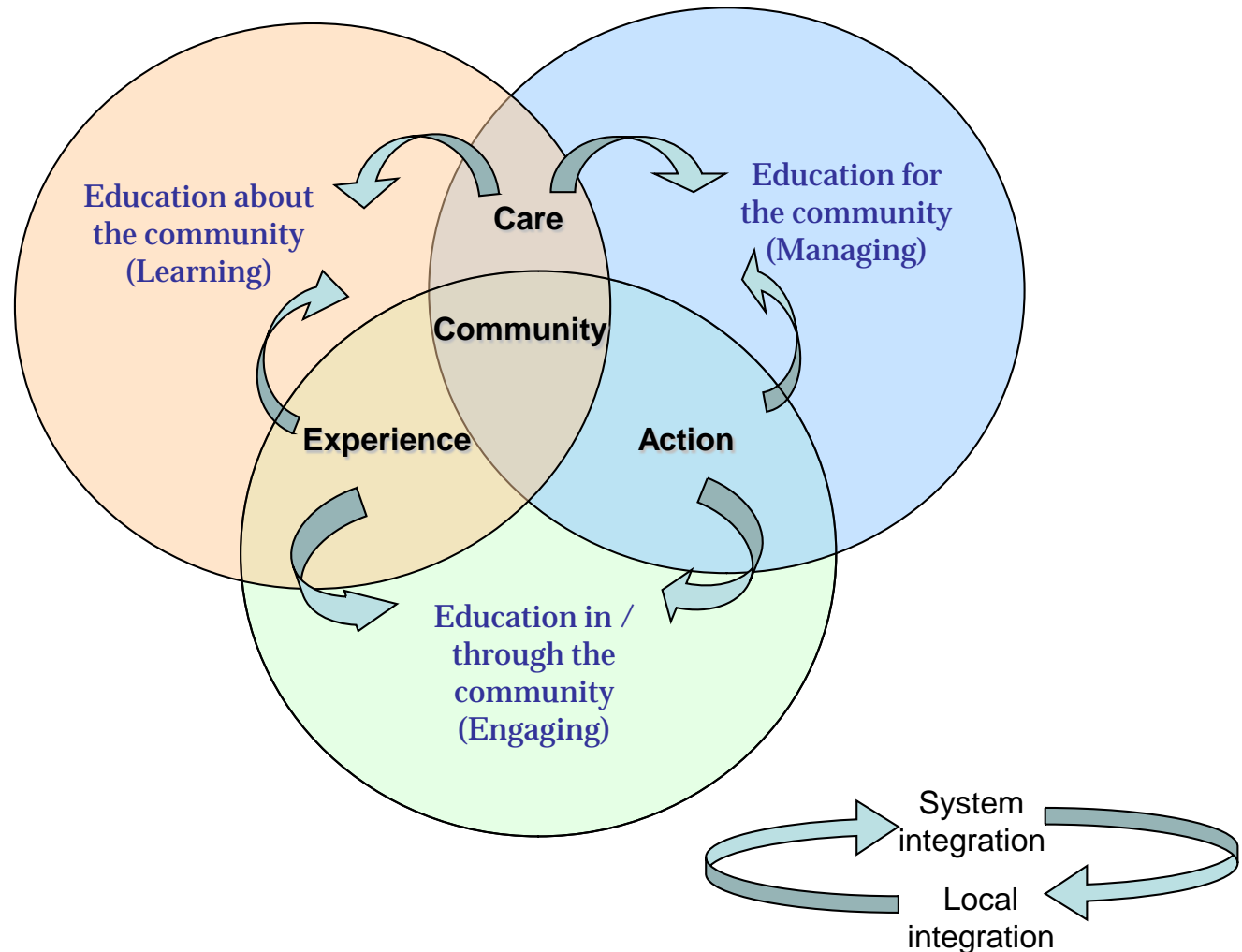
## *Connecting curricula and the community*

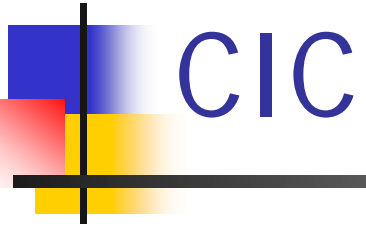
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- is the question of transformation of “community capital” and “curriculum capital” in curriculum development.
- If the school could develop favorable conditions for this transformation, the CIC can be prolonged in the community.

# The Education Cycle of CIC

*Connecting school and the community*





CIC

# service learning Curriculum



# Community Investigation

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First step and the most important step

- curriculum initiator, *e.g. teachers and social workers*, identify community capital
- Observation, dialogue and empathetic understanding are the essential activities
- Interview, community walk.... or in any form you like
- Locate Social capital

# Initiating SL curriculum: Key points



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- Cross-disciplinary: e.g. EPA, HE, D&T
- Put forward a powerful issue: that could facilitate students to find answers from senior citizens of the community and motivate students to apply their learning to develop community services which are relevant to the senior citizens.  
e.g. "A healthy and wealthy lives and lifestyles for senior citizens"



# Structure of the Curriculum

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- Classroom teaching sessions interlace with community experiences sessions
  - So that classroom teaching and community experience inform each other
- The structure follows the education about, education for, education in/through processes
- community services in CIC is not a preset activity in the curriculum, its emerges in the flow of the curriculum
- Integrate discipline knowledge into services





## Community service A:

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Sub- theme: Healthy Eating

Discipline: Home Economics

Community Services: Promote healthy eating

Task: Design and promote Chinese Pudding  
Recipes

- Dialogue with critical understanding



## Community service B:

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Sub- theme: Leisure activities

Discipline: Design and technology

Community Services: redesign benches and chairs in community gardens

Task: Lobby councilors and officials to realize the changes

- Initiate another level of social changes



## Community service C:

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Sub- theme: intergenerational solidarity

Community Services: Students learnt Baduanjin (八段錦), one form 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.

- Process of Capital Transformation

# Concluding remarks:

## “Classroom in community”

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- It is inherently empowering, which affirms mutuality, collaboration, empathy and care.
- It asserts students as change agent.
- Learning is student centered.
- It is a holistic and situated learning.
- It can be the sustained curricula in the community (Key issues: powerful issue and Capital reproduction)



Thank you very much!!

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