ECDA EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE 2018

Building Professional Capacity

Concurrent Workshop B
Effective pedagogical leadership for programme quality - A case study

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Concurrent Workshop Overview

Introduction
- Key Learning Outcomes

Part I
- Research Overview and Objectives
- Literature Review
- Research Methods
- Data Analysis
- Discussion and Conclusion

Part II
- Reflective Practice
  - Individual Reflections
  - Group Discussions
  - Sharing

Q&A

Schedule

Introduction
3.45 – 3.50pm: Introduction and Key Learning Outcomes

Part I
3.50 – 3.55pm: Research Overview and Objectives
3.55 – 4.05pm: Literature Review
4.05 – 4.15pm: Research Methods
4.15 – 4.25pm: Data Analysis
4.25 – 4.40pm: Discussion and Conclusion

Part II
Reflective Practice
4.40 - 4.50pm: Individual Reflections
4.50 – 5.05pm: Group Discussions
5.05 – 5.15pm: Q&A

Key Learning Outcomes

This concurrent workshop aims to share on a case study of an effective pedagogical leader in the local early childhood context.

It will demonstrate how effective pedagogical leadership can contribute to programme quality in your centre and how you can apply the following learning points in your practice.

From the session, you will:

1. **Learn** more about pedagogical leadership,

2. **Reflect** on your practice, and

3. **Apply** some of the strategies

to build a strong foundation for the children in your centre.

Introduction

Hi! My name is **Sandra!**

I am currently a lecturer at NIE.

I am with the Policy and Leadership Academic Group, teaching pre-service teachers and Master level students.

Some of you may find me familiar as I had worked at ECDA, MOE Pre-school Education Branch and SUSS prior to joining NIE.

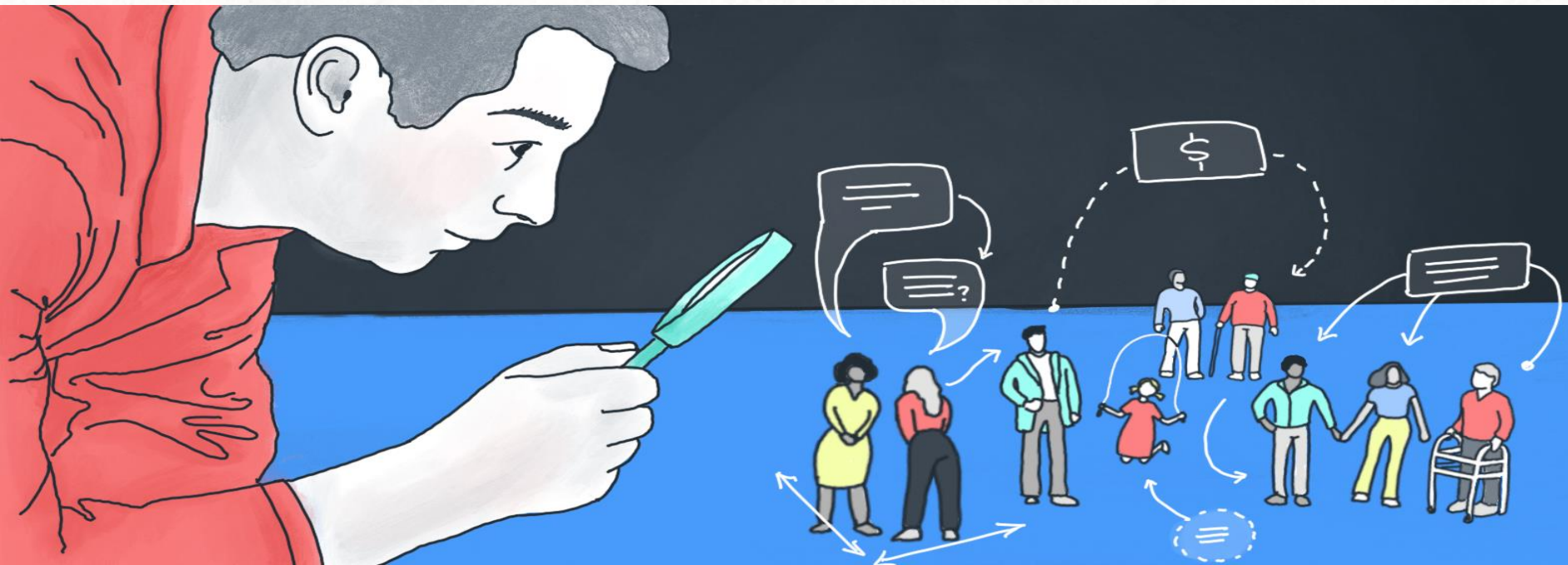Now turn to the neighbours on your table and introduce yourself:

**Hi! My name is …..
I am from (centre).**

hi, my name is…

PART I

▸ Research Overview and Objectives

▸ Literature Review

▸ Research Methods

▸ Data Analysis

▸ Discussion and Conclusion

Research Overview and Objectives

An exploratory case study on pedagogical leadership in Singapore's Early Childhood (EC) context

Pedagogical leadership is defined as
"*leadership focused on **curriculum and pedagogy**… with an emphasis on **educational purposes** such as establishing educational goals, curriculum planning, and evaluating teachers and teaching* [which is pivotal for children's learning and development]"
(Ord, Mane, Smorti, Carroll-Lind, Robinson, Armstrong-Read, Brown-Cooper, Meredith, Rickard & Jalal, 2013, p.1)

EC leaders need to take on the role of a pedagogical leader to advance **programme quality** and to ensure that sound pedagogies are in place

In Singapore, it is not known how EC leaders advance pedagogical leadership in their own settings

Research Overview and Objectives

▸ Curriculum in the EC field includes both **care and educational** components

▸ In ECCE, pedagogical practice is closely linked to **child development**, **health and safety**, and the **quality of programmes and curriculum** in place

▸ Strong emphasis on *the whole child* and a **child-centred** approach towards promoting children's **holistic development**

Research Questions:

▸ How is pedagogical leadership enacted in a child care centre in the Early Childhood context of Singapore?

▸ How does a child care centre principal take on the role of a pedagogical leader in her setting?

▸ What are the leadership practices that contribute to the SPARK commendation award for the centre?

Literature Review

▸ In Singapore, there are **diverse operators** that offer care and educational services for children between 2 months to 6 years

▸ The preschool landscape is dominated by the **private sector** that includes both profit-making and non-profit organisations, and government funded operators (AOps & POps)

▸ It operates in a **market-based system** and is **regulated** by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) in Singapore

▸ Types of ECCE services:

▸ **Child Care Centres** (2 months – 6 years)
  - Infant-toddler care programmes (2 – 18 months)
  - Full day, half day or flexible programmes

▸ **Kindergartens** (4 – 6 years)
  - 3 levels: Nursery, Kindergarten 1, Kindergarten 2
  - Sessional programmes (3- or 4- hour sessions)

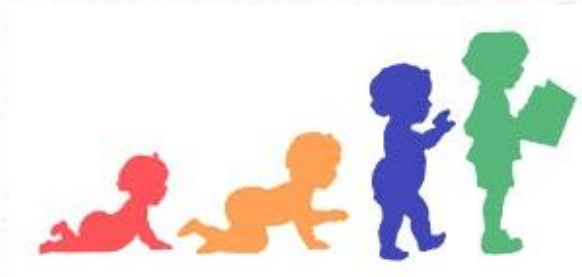▸ In a **diverse landscape**, there are **different** programmes, curriculum models and philosophies
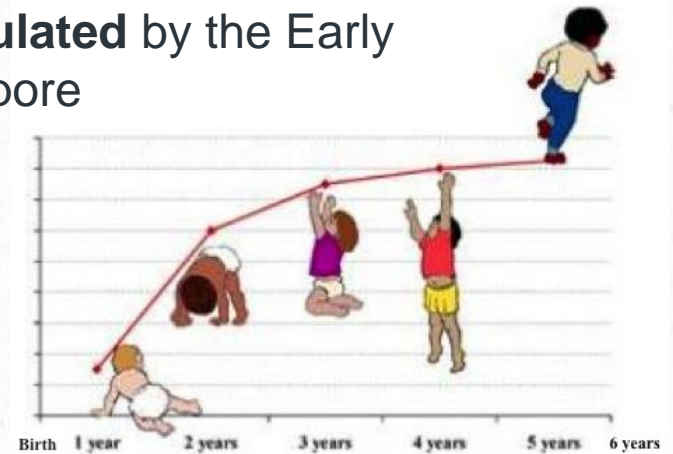
Literature Review

Importance of Quality in ECCE

▸ Child development & later learning trajectory

▸ Foundation for 21st Century workforce

▸ Investment as a social and economic asset for the nation

▸ Human capital (Watson, et al, 2012, p. 37)

"*Positive child outcomes* are highly dependent on the quality of ECCE services they receive in the early years" (Ang, 2012).

Key drivers for quality

▸ Government

▸ Operators

▸ **EC leaders**

▸ Teachers

▸ This study posits that **pedagogical leadership** is one of the key drivers for programme quality

Literature Review

Early Childhood Leaders

▸ Facilitate the provision and delivery of **an integrated and holistic curriculum** for young children through **leading and managing** their settings efficiently (ECDA, 2014)

▸ **Work closely with educators, children's families and the community** to ensure the **quality provision** of care and educational services (Kagan & Bowman, 1997)

▸ **Provide training opportunities for teachers** and facilitate discussions to enhance teachers' expertise, capabilities and commitment to the centre curriculum (Heikka, 2012)

▸ **Stay updated with the trends and issues** in the field and disseminate this information to their staff to help them keep abreast of the latest developments in the EC field (Kagan & Bowman, 1997)

EC leaders are the *"designers of **visions, frameworks** and **guidelines** for centre-based practice"* (Heikka, 2012, p.262)

Literature Review

Pedagogical Leaders…

▸ Set **vision & goals**

▸ Exercise **values based leadership**

▸ **Motivate** their followers

▸ **Build capability and human capital**

▸ Manage, and are knowledgeable about **curriculum and instruction**, and **cross-disciplinary work** (component of care)

▸ **Equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge**

▸ Provide leadership in the **design and delivery of the curriculum**

▸ Responsible for the quality of program and curriculum in their settings

▸ **Promote collaboration, partnerships and relationship building**

▸ Focus on, and lead their teams towards **positive child outcomes and educational goals**

Research Methods

Case study approach

▸ **Purposeful sampling**
  ○ Research site: 1 Anchor Operator Child Care Centre with SPARK Commendation award*

▸ **Sample size**
  ○ 1 principal
  ○ 1 K1 teacher
  ○ 6 children
  ○ 8 parents

▸ **Data collection**
  ○ Artefacts collection (SPARK reports, curriculum plans, teacher observation notes, child observations, children's portfolios etc.)
  ○ Questionnaires and interviews with principal and teacher
  ○ Classroom observations using a rubrics developed based on literature
  ○ Observation of principal conducting teacher observation
  ○ Interviews with children
  ○ Parent survey

*SPARK Commendation award is awarded to centres with good teaching and learning practices

Research Methods

Profile of the research site

▸ Site Profile: Child Care Centre

▸ Government funded Anchor Operator

▸ Caters to middle income families in the heartlands

▸ Child care and kindergarten programmes for children from 2 months to 6 years

▸ Uses thematic and inquiry approaches

Data Analysis

- **Data analysis methods**
- Interpretive analysis , analytic induction and content analysis, coding, triangulation, confirmation of themes using concept analysis

Stage 1 & 2 Data Collection & Analysis:
Rubrics for Pedagogical Leadership

8 Dimensions of the rubrics

Vision & goal setting

Values based leadership

Motivation

Capability building/ human capital

Manage and is knowledgeable about curriculum and instructional programmes

Cross-disciplinary work in Early Childhood Care and Education

Collaboration, partnerships and relationship building

Child outcomes

Analysed

Stage 3 Data Analysis: Phase 1
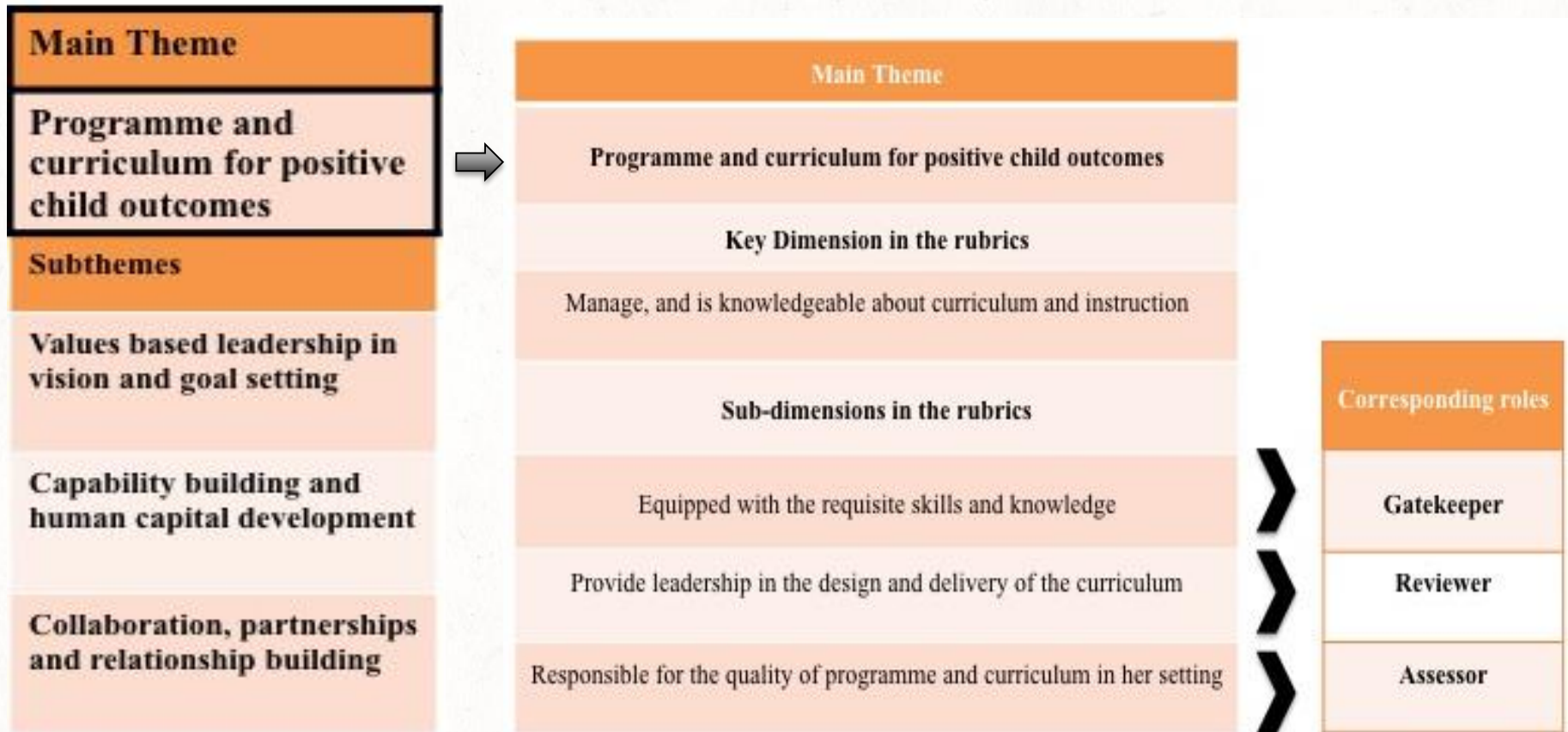Qualitative content analysis & coding

Emergent Themes

Programme and curriculum for positive child outcomes
- Manage and and is knowledgeable about Curriculum and Instructional Programmes
- Cross-disciplinary work in Early Childhood Care and Education
- Child Outcomes

Values based leadership in vision and goal setting
- Vision & goal setting
- Values based leadership

Capability building and human capital development
- Motivation
- Capability building/ human capital

Collaboration, partnerships and relationship building

Synthesised

Phase 2
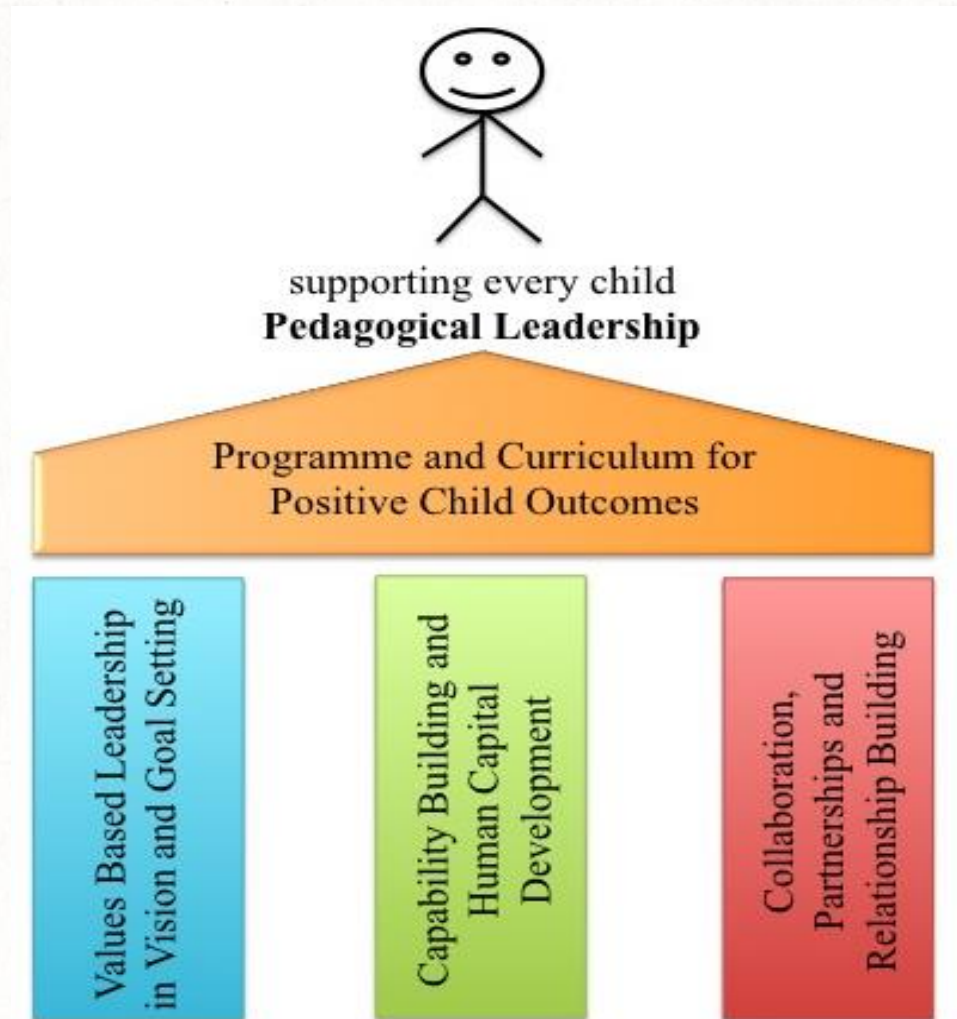Main theme and subthemes

Main Theme

Programme and curriculum for positive child outcomes

Subthemes

Values based leadership in vision and goal setting

Capability building and human capital development

Collaboration, partnerships and relationship building

DATA ANALYSIS

Main Theme
Main Theme

Programme and curriculum for positive child outcomes
Subthemes
Values based leadership in vision and goal setting
Capability building and human capital development
Collaboration, partnerships and relationship building

Main Theme	Corresponding roles
Programme and curriculum for positive child outcomes	
Key Dimension in the rubrics	
Manage, and is knowledgeable about curriculum and instruction	
Sub-dimensions in the rubrics	
Equipped with the requisite skills and knowledge	Gatekeeper
Provide leadership in the design and delivery of the curriculum	Reviewer
Responsible for the quality of programme and curriculum in her setting	Assessor

Discussion and Conclusion

Pedagogical Leadership Framework

Discussion and Conclusion

3 Key Roles of a Pedagogical Leader

- **Gatekeeper**
- **Reviewer**
- **Assessor**

"I'm like the **gatekeeper** so I make sure the teachers start the class on time, make sure the children are not drinking water for 10 minutes, 20 minutes, you know. I think **that is the kind of thing I do in terms of curriculum, environment set up,** etc…"

"Quality must be throughout the centre; everybody is on the same page. Purposeful play should look the same from toddler class to K2, and the English to the Chinese. **So it cannot be that only the English teachers are doing it but the Chinese teachers are not**… So I say, 'teachers you need to know what is in this book, so you can better your own teaching in terms of the Chinese language'… **So this is why I call myself a reviewer. To me, I am looking at the bigger picture**. For the teachers, of course they are just looking purely on curriculum but **I'm looking as a whole… how everything affects the centre's curriculum."**

"I say **I am an assessor because how well the teachers are delivering the curriculum, is not about, whether you deliver or not, but how well…**

Discussion and Conclusion

- From the study, the most prominent value the principal demonstrates is her **child centred approach** (her personal philosophy)

"I think **children (are) the one that pushes me on**, whether **(as) a teacher or a principal…** if as a teacher, we can do our best, as a leader, **we can do our best, in our various roles**... I think (that) **all the children will benefit somehow**… that's the thing that really pushes me on"

- Other dominant values include **integrity, relationship building** and **teamwork**
- In line with two of the dominant values she exhibited in values based leadership, her strong belief in teamwork and relationships building translate into her commitment to build teacher capability. Her goal was for her teachers to become **independent, intentional teachers**

"If I really want to work on developing a person, a teacher, I need to give them time, undisturbed time. From the moment I step into the centre, classroom observations to mentoring, to guiding, to facilitating… all these need time."

Discussion and Conclusion

▸ Aligned with two of the dominant values she exhibited in values based leadership, **teamwork** and **relationships building,** she builds partnerships within the centre (with the teachers), with parents and the community

"I don't believe in using my authority to get the teachers to listen… so if I can **engage them to be on the same platform, same mind frame as me, we can work as a (team),** you know, ten brains together, or twenty brains together.**"**

"We have **a lot of parental involvement programme**… So she actually plans for a lot of events **involving parents, and families to actually come in and participate**…" - K1 T

▸ Parents also shared in the survey that the **communication channels** were open and they felt that they could approach the principal easily and there was a culture of trust

▸ In this centre, the teacher shared that whenever an incident arises, parents would generally approach her directly instead of going straight to the principal. This indicates trust and a positive centre-parents relationship, as confirmed by one of the children:

Interviewer: "Do mummy and daddy come to school?"
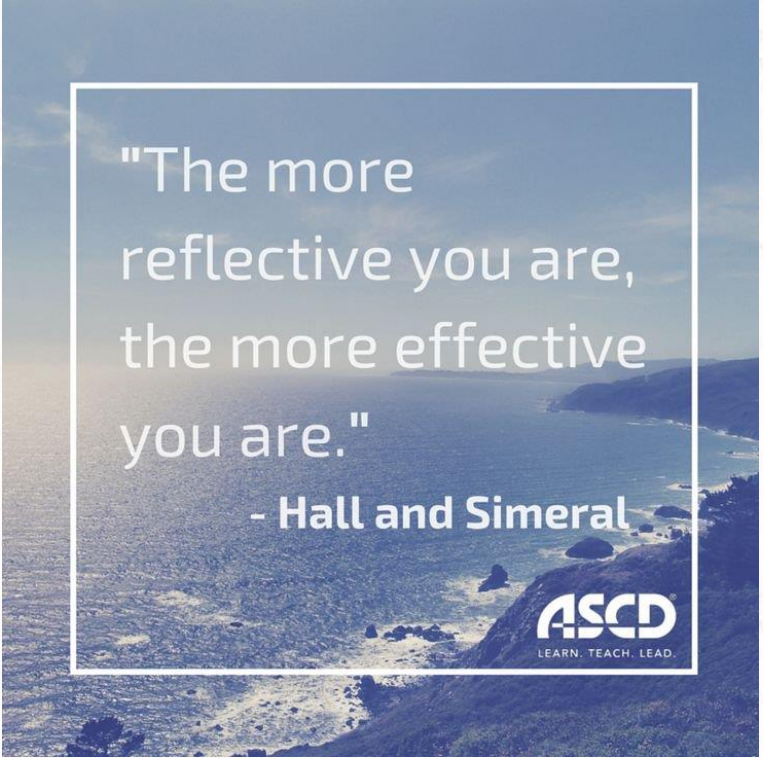**Child:** "Sometimes… when I am naughty, I tell my mummy and daddy… then come to school then ask Teacher or Principal"

▸ **Reflective Practice**
- ○ Individual Reflections
- ○ Group Discussions

Individual Reflections

Fill in the handout given to you and In your role as a leader or a teacher, rate the applicability of the 8 items using the following rating scale :

3 – Most applicable   **2** – Neutral   **1** – Not applicable

Personal Reflections

After you have rated the items, think about the following questions and jot them down.
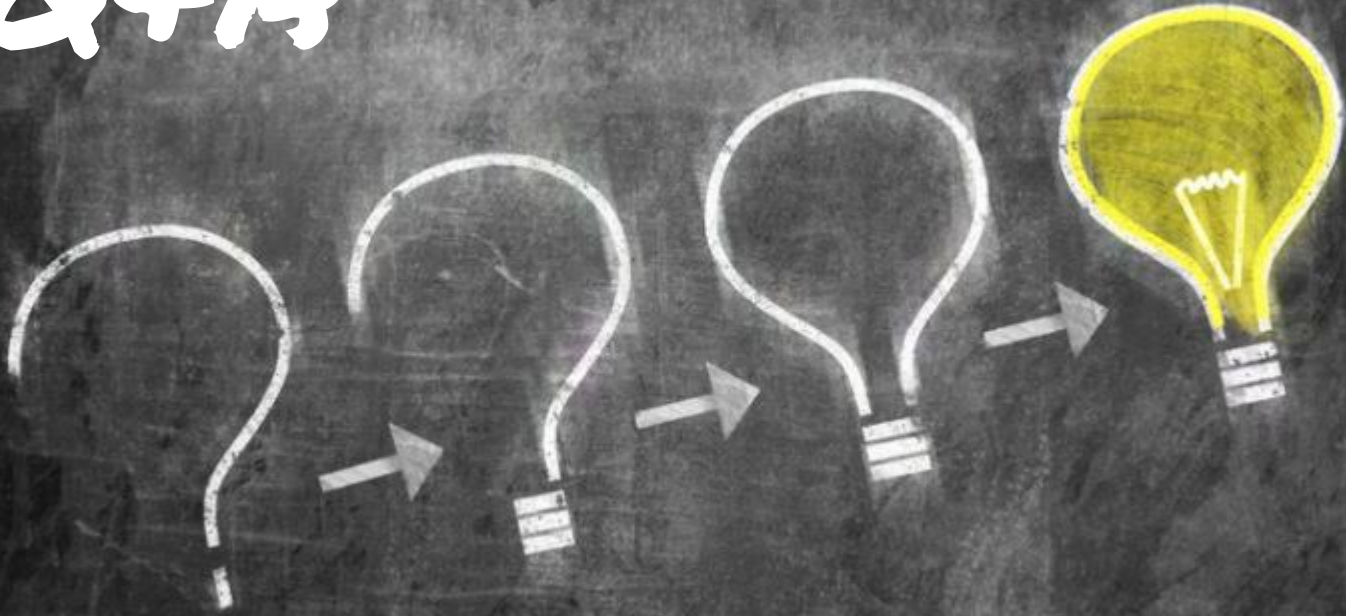
▸ List down the items ranked **"3"** and the reasons why they are most applicable to you

▸ List down the items ranked **"1"** and the reasons why they are not applicable to you

▸ Identify areas of improvement and/or possible changes you can adopt in your centre/classroom

▸ Any other thoughts and ideas?

Group Discussions and Sharing

▸ Share 3 pertinent points you have learnt about adopting pedagogical leadership in your role as a leader/educator

▸ You may wish to use the following pointers for your sharing:
In our group, we are leaders, educators or both,
- We are best able to adopt . in our role in our centres
- What we have found to be important for us is/are …
- We find it most challenging to … in our centres
- We will improve on … in our centres