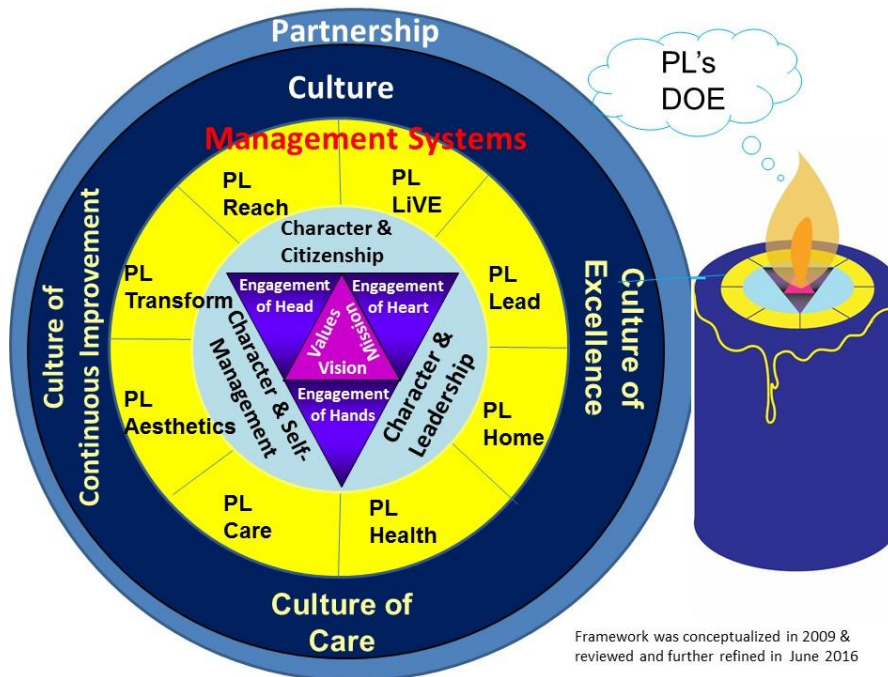


USING MACRO LENSES

Assessment in Student Leadership Development (SLD)

Character Development Framework at Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School (Secondary) PLMGS(Sec)

For this month, we take a look at Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School (Secondary)'s (PLMGS (Sec)) approach to Student Leadership Development (SLD). To fully appreciate the pivotal role that the school's SLD, or also known as PL Lead plays, it is important to first understand the school's Character Development (CD) framework. PL Lead is a key management system of PLMGS (Sec)'s CD Framework.



PLMGS (Sec) Character Development (CD) Framework

The school's commitment to CD is articulated in the school's vision of "producing women of fine character with a passion for life and learning". The school adopts a whole-school approach in the delivery of CD. It uses the eight integrated management systems with a sound approach and well-defined processes such as explicit teaching and modelling of values and skills. Through the CD Framework, every student is nurtured through the teaching of values and lifeskills (values-in-action), with a focus on acquiring self-management skills, leadership and citizenship competencies so that she will be a woman of fine character – one who is confident, a passionate learner, an active citizen and an inspiring leader.

Assessment and Evaluation Approach to SLD at Paya Lebar Methodist Girls' School (Secondary)

The whole school approach to SLD is aligned to the school's mission to nurture every PL-Lite into a whole person and the school's vision of producing women of fine character with a passion for life and learning. The school refers to her students as "PL-Lites" using a pun on the word "lights" as the school want them to be lights that make a difference to the community.

In line with the school's Desired Outcome of Education of nurturing '**Inspiring Leaders**', PLMGS (Sec)'s Student Leadership Committee or PL Lead team, seeks to explore, develop and maximise the leadership potential for all students.

The school adopts a progressive three-stage leadership training programme in the form of the PL Student Leadership Development Model (SLDM):

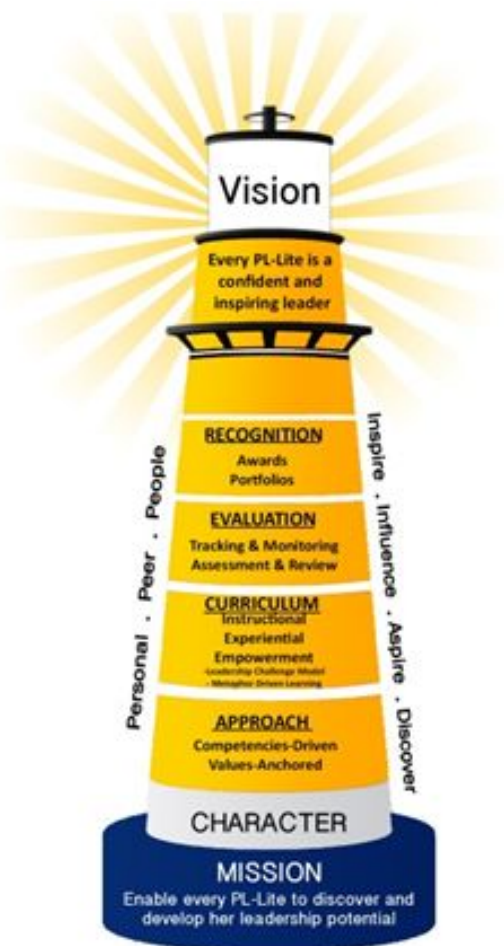
- (a) **Personal** Leadership,
- (b) **Peer** Leadership
- (c) **People** leadership.

In 2016, the SLDM incorporated the 5 practices from the Student Leadership Challenge Model (LCM) developed by James Kouzes and Barry Posner (K&P) as part of the new cycle of improvement resulting from strategic review.

The PL Student Leadership Framework

The PL student Leadership Framework is represented in the form of a lighthouse to remind PL-Lites that they are to be a light to the community. The base of the lighthouse begins with character as the foundation on which everything else is built upon and at the top is the vision of the school. The approach to student leadership development is the intentional development of every PL-Lite through programmes that are competencies-driven (unpacked from LCM) and values-anchored (cascaded from school values).

The PL Lead curriculum is categorised into Instructional, Experiential and Empowerment to provide PL-Lites a variety of learning opportunities to build and strengthen the leadership competencies. Courses, workshops and camps are conducted to empower student leaders to organise various school wide and community events.



Each student leadership developmental stage, (starting with **Personal**, followed by **Peer** and ending with **People**) is age appropriate, with a leadership focus on the themes of “**I Discover**” (Sec 1), “**I Aspire**” (Sec 2), “**I Influence**” (Sec 3) and “**I Inspire**” (Sec 4/5).

At Secondary One, PL-Lites go through “Leadership 101” programme to develop their **Personal** leadership. This includes the introduction of the 5 Practices of the LCM, as well as, the Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness (DISC) Profiling which is also carried out to help the students discover their strengths, understand themselves and others at a deeper level.

At Secondary Two, PL-Lites are developed in **Peer** leadership through “Leadership 201”. The students at this level participate in a cohort ‘iAspire’ camp where they will learn to lead through establishing strong peer relationships. At this level, all students will also reflect on their personal leadership experience by utilising the K&P Student Leadership Practices inventory (SLPI) as a tool for leadership skills assessment and follow-up. The Sec 2 students will undertake the self-assessment survey and invite observers to provide feedback about their leadership competencies as well.

This assessment data provides valuable information for teachers mentoring the student leaders as teacher mentors are able to provide specific feedback to help students develop and strengthen their leadership competencies. Analysing this collated data also allows the PL Lead team to be strategic in their planning to customise the training programmes to meet the different needs of students.



Student Leaders working together as a team

At Secondary Three, the PL-Lites will be developed in **People** leadership through a wide range of leadership roles and involvement in various Values-in-action projects (VIA). In their graduating year, students will take the SLPI a second time to chart the growth in their leadership competencies over the years. At the same time, many who have taken up formal leadership roles at school and CCA level are given opportunities to mentor their juniors.



Student Leaders working together during the sea expedition

In line with the belief that “every girl is a leader,” PL Lead ensures that there are multiple platforms for PL-Lites to take up leadership positions. Examples of leadership positions include Class Leaders, CCA leaders, House Leaders, Prefects and Hospitality team leaders.

The take-up rate for the Hospitality Team is high among the Normal Stream (NA & NT) students. Prior to taking up the hospitality roles, the students would be trained by the trainers from Republic Polytechnic and SHATEC. Students in the Hospitality Team will host visitors to the school and are given a special badge and uniform to recognise their role and contribution towards the school.

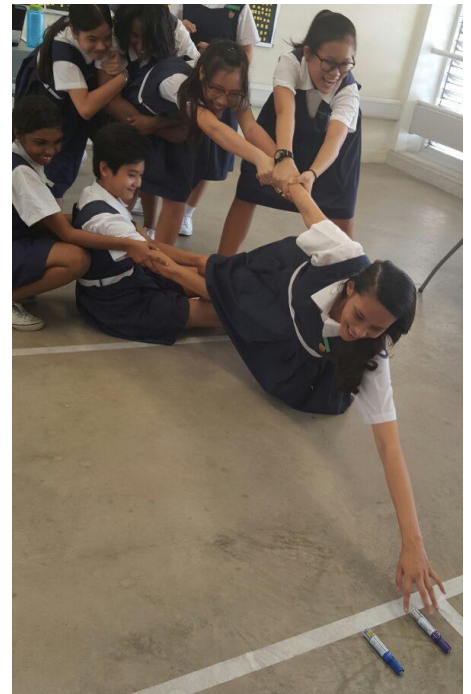
The PL Lead curriculum is evaluated regularly to ensure that it is rigorous and relevant. To facilitate the student leaders applying what they have learned in their roles, teacher mentors are assigned to chart the progress of each student leader.

Students’ leadership development is closely tracked and monitored by teachers in-charge. In recognition of students’ leadership contribution and growth, awards are given to deserving students to recognise their accomplishments to the school and the community for example, the school-based Colours Award and the national-based EAGLES Award.

Outcomes and Evaluation of the PL Lead Programme

Since the conception and implementation of the PL Lead Framework in 2006, PLMGS (Sec) has been awarded the Outstanding Character Development Award in 2009 and 2012. The school evaluates the effectiveness of its PL Lead programme by using the Student Leadership Inventory Practices (SLPI), the PLMGS (Sec) Parents' Survey and pre-and-post internal surveys.

From the feedback received, the student leaders see themselves as bridges between the teachers and the student body. They feel that they are "able to shine" through helping others. They see the leadership opportunities in the school as a means to gain exposure and to make responsible decisions. They see themselves being pushed to the limits, but always within sight of the teachers who are always present to "pull them back up."



Students experiencing "Enabling Others to Act" as part of LCM during the leadership module

Going Forward

Since 2008, the school has been organising leadership conferences for student leaders and the community. In 2014, the school concluded its 6th PL-NYC Student Leadership Conference, "Inspiring Leaders in the Global Community", which was held in collaboration with the National Youth Council, the Singapore Committee of United Nations, People's Association and the National Institute of Community Leaders. PLMGS (Sec) hopes to hold similar Student Leadership conferences in the future.

The school hopes that more PL-Lites will be empowered to organise student-initiated projects to make a difference to the school and community. The school plans to introduce leadership opportunities at the lower secondary level to foster this culture of empowerment.

In addition, the school is embarking on a "Go Light Your World" initiative where student leaders encourage the student population to make a difference in school or to the community by initiating projects in areas that they feel most passionate in. This initiative is modelled after the 'Campus Changemaker' project where students are trained as panellists to evaluate the projects of their peers. The school aspires to elevate this to a level where all students are inspiring leaders as they are able to make an impact on the community through their student initiated projects.

