

Revised framework to recognise CCA achievements a leap in right direction

FROM KWAN JIN YAO

The revised Leadership, Achievement, Participation and Service (LEAPS) framework, which gives equal weightage across the four domains and includes a wider range of accomplishments, is encouraging. (“MOE revises framework for recognising CCA achievements”; Jan 10)

This is probably part of the Ministry of Education’s (MOE) push to move beyond a traditional, disproportionate focus on academic pursuit to encourage pupils to explore their interests. But shortcomings could surface after a few months of implementation.

For instance, while there may be greater quantitative emphasis on community service and community involvement programmes in terms of the hours and breadth of the projects, this must be matched by opportunities for introspection.

Yet, in an imperfect assessment system, there should be room to exercise discretion flexibly. Administrators seem capable of doing so and we should be off to a good start.

Sceptics point to the perverse incentives created when pupils undertake endeavours not out of interest, but from a desire to maximise their points: What are the minimum requirements to be considered “excellent”? Which initiative will be most beneficial to one’s portfolio?

The concern is that they will carry over such pragmatism to junior

colleges and polytechnics when they prepare to apply for universities and scholarships. The revised framework may reduce such predilections, but the problem will persist.

One could argue that such intents, besides being hard to ascertain accurately, are not necessarily deleterious. Furthermore, the ubiquity of learning opportunities and interactions can yield unexpected outcomes.

I made my first foray into service-learning with the aim of dolling up my curriculum vitae, to prove to various assessors that I was a “young, passionate, civic-minded Singaporean with a big heart for the community”.

After years of involvement and self-assessment — part of the growing-up process — I recognised how myopic and selfish I had been. In other words, individuals can, and do, change. Unfortunately, the responsibility appears to fall on our overstretched educators.

There could be frank discussions within the classroom about motivations and to challenge preconceptions: Why choose this co-curricular activity or undertaking? How can we make service projects more meaningful? Can more be done?

Perhaps parents could feature more prominently in these learning processes, to help the young ones.

And while the MOE can get carried away with its language revolving around frameworks and the holistic development of individuals, credit is due here; this is a good leap forward.

Keep DNC Registry rules simple

FROM DANIEL CHAN

I refer to the report, “DNC guidelines for telcos, property agencies proposed” (Jan 24). It is difficult and confusing to be defining scenarios and applying different rules to different scenarios.

The Personal Data Protection Commission (PDPC) should consider the sentiments of consumers who receive unsolicited SMS, emails and calls.

Imagine being woken up in London or New York because an estate agent

sent a message to one’s phone. If this happens more than twice, it becomes more than a nuisance.

To end any confusion, the Personal Data Protection Act must be applied in its original spirit, that is, if one registers with the Do Not Call Registry, there should be no more unsolicited telemarketing.

The PDPC should not try to over-engineer a solution to please all parties. Let us not have a Do Not Call scheme that is as complex as our taxi fare structure.

Didn’t Anton Casey commit sedition?

FROM STEVE WANG

In “Act against threats to Casey family” (Jan 27), the writer stated that Mr Anton Casey did not commit a crime.

Under the Sedition Act, any action or words that raise discontent or disaffection among citizens or residents, or that promote feelings of ill will and hostility between different races or classes of the population, have a

sedition tendency.

Would Mr Casey’s behaviour not be enough to bring him to court? He has been living here for 12 years and should have known what was within his rights. His remarks, which looked down on average earners as being poor, were unacceptable.

If the authorities were generous, they could just revoke his permanent residency without charging him, to deter others from making such remarks.

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