



East Spring Secondary School

Power of Positive Energy (PPE)

Student Goals/Outcomes for Excellence & Success

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PPE Sharing

Good Morning Mrs Jalil, Mrs Mohinder, Mr Chan, teachers and fellow East Springians. I'm Tobias Tan from 4E1 as well as from the Humanities Talent Management Programme. Today I'll be giving my take on 21st century skills and competences and how they pave the way for academic success. But first, here's a story: Once there were 4 blind men trying to figure out what an elephant looks like, each standing at different positions. The 1st blind men felt the trunk and concluded that the elephant was long like a snake; the 2nd felt the ears and said it was wide like a fan; the 3rd felt the legs and assumed it was thick as a tree trunk; the 4th felt the tail and said it was thin like a rope. As a result, all 4 men argued over who was right.

So what can we learn from this tale? A key takeaway would be that we can't be one sided in our opinions; rather we must learn to be open to the views of others. Personally for me, I took part in planning for last year's Sec 2 heritage trail at Kranji as well as in the Inter-School History World War II Strategy competition. Through these experiences, I've seen many suggestions being raised and debated over, so as to make the project better; my fellow Humanities schoolmates also explored various strategies that have never been planned out before, in anticipation of the stiff competition among the top schools. Eventually we emerged champions in the competition, because we've learnt the value of each strategy and the principle of applying different strategies in different situations.

Critical thinking, which was a central skill in the Humanities Talent Management Programme, is also important in learning to challenge existing norms. For example, in planning the Sec 2 heritage trails to the Singapore River and Kranji, I've learnt to question the way historical landmarks are conserved in Singapore and the importance of protecting our identity. More importantly, critical thinking empowers a person to voice out, even to higher authority such as the Singapore Government. We must realize that in the real world, things aren't perfect, therefore we can question why some things are in place, and what we can do to challenge and improve the current situation.

By our willingness to ask questions, we can clarify doubts and confusion instead of staying lost; in asking deep and difficult questions, we get out of our cosy little bubbles and take the real world by its horns. Such as in our studies; if we don't clarify what was taught in class and just keep quiet, how will we ever reach our full potential?

Before I end off, let me leave with a quote, "don't travel the road often taken, but walk away from the path and leave a trail." That's all from me this morning, thank you for listening.

