

VOICES

Give students a platform to voice their concerns

Letter from Kwan Jin Yao

THE Singapore Kindness Movement Youth Forum and the corresponding article "Grades more important than graciousness" (Nov 5) come at a time when the sense of belonging of young Singaporeans come into question.

Following a dialogue with Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, it has been promptly asserted through a National Education (NE) seminar that an overwhelming percentage of students do feel a positive sense of attachment to the country. However — beyond patriotism and pride — what needs to be further comprehended is that blind understanding and acceptance would no longer be the norm; as students show increased awareness of issues and concerns and seek to stake their claim accordingly.

Cognisant of the developments, there needs to be a proper platform established, as a timely extension of the NE or inter-disciplinary approaches, for such perspectives on policy and socio-political issues to be properly channelled.

The NE package, poised to pedantically educate and monotonously drown individuals with facts and information, clearly has not succeeded in genuine engagement and solicitation of feedback. Further, despite a proliferation of school forums and dialogues, there

is no proper affirmation of suggestions or recommendations. Ideas are merely bounced around with no proper conclusions.

Even as the administration points to the NE committee and the national feedback agency, Reaching Everyone for Active Citizenry@Home (REACH), effective channels for policy recommendations are few. The lack of awareness and outreach remain as a challenge. Over time, the NE programme presents itself to be a one-way communication, with little space to encourage discussions or responses.

The importance to educate students not to take information at face value cannot be undermined. The plethora of commentaries and articles available require greater analytical skills to discern between fact and fiction, as well as to generate a constructive space to voice their opinions. Youths do have great ideas that should not remain unaddressed. The NE and patriotism does not mean blind compliance and acceptance of the status quo; we should embrace this increased connectivity and sense of empowerment that students are speedily developing and play it to our advantage.

As stakeholders of the country, it is only logical for students to be part of policy feedback and formation process. If we dangerously discount these views and take them for granted, we would only be at the losing end.



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Isn't that a waste of electricity?

Letter from Lim Hwee Chian

I AM a mioTV subscriber and I have always had to wait for more than five minutes for the setup box to boot up whenever I turn off the machine.

The SingTel customer relations staff have advised me to leave the modem on in standby mode as this can help to minimise the start up time.

Would not leaving the modem in standby mode result in a waste of electricity?

Are we not supposed to play our part in saving the earth by reducing the unnecessary use of electricity?

There must be room for improvement in the mioTV service.

The customer relations staff should not simply advise subscribers to leave the modem switched on 24/7.

Tracked me down to return bag

Letter from T H Chua

I AM writing to express my utmost gratitude to a Mr Ravichandran s/o Muthureeran and his mother, Madam Sithaletchemi N, of Block 104, Commonwealth Crescent.

On Nov 1, I was in the midst of moving out of Tanglin Halt and, in that stressful and

chaotic situation, I left behind a bag with my laptop, smartphone and other personal items on a seat at the void deck.

Mr Ravi and his mother picked up the bag and took the trouble to track me down and return the items.

Their act is indeed a source of inspiration for one and all.

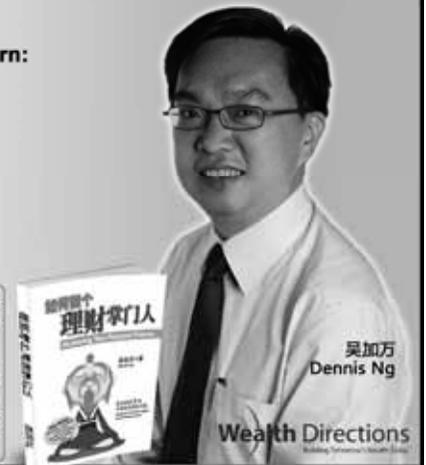
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Dennis Ng (吴加万) is an accountant by training with 17 years of banking experience. In 2003, he founded www.HousingLoanSG.com - a leading Mortgage Consultancy in Singapore.

Dennis Ng is a highly sought-after financial expert by TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. He is a columnist for *mypaper* financial column, an *IMSavvy* Blogger at CPF website www.imsavvy.sg and the Bestselling Author of Singapore's Very First Bilingual Book on Personal Finance entitled *Mastering Your Personal Finance* (《如何做个理财掌门人》)



吴加万
Dennis Ng

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