

TODAY
WE SET YOU THINKING

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Correction

● In our report “Current, former national athletes to lead opening ceremony torch relay” (May 7), we named incorrectly the Singapore South-East Asian Games organising committee’s chairman of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. The chairman is Colonel Lawrence Lim. We apologise for the error.

Bosses, MOE of different minds

FROM KWAN JIN YAO

In drawing a connection between intelligence and higher salaries, in “Intelligent employees, not degree holders, secure higher salaries” (May 9), the writer ignores other realities.

Intelligence is not necessarily a singular, generalised concept. Especially within Singapore’s educational

system, it has been defined too narrowly; more importantly, intelligence or degrees per se do not determine higher salaries or, rather, career success in industries.

While the writer makes multiple references to intelligence — that employers “want to hire from the most intelligent 10 per cent of the cohort”, for instance — there was no attempt

to make sense of it.

What does it mean to be intelligent? Understood as the ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills, intelligence is often equated with good performance in our schools, environments where academic abilities are prized.

At present, the observation is that students flourish in different domains and should seize opportunities to develop multiple intelligences.

It is, therefore, no surprise that the Ministry of Education (MOE) has, in recent years, sought to diversify learning pathways in differentiated institutions, wherein intelligence is measured across more dimensions.

The conundrum is the disconnect between what the MOE tries to foster and the many employers’ demands for degrees as a signalling mechanism. Even to someone confident about the duties of a given position, getting a degree seems imperative.

Beyond that knock on the door, what matters most is not only intelligence or degrees, but one’s willingness to commit to hard graft and improving oneself. Also, the notion of a craftsman-like approach has become more ubiquitous.

Perhaps the perspective of the writer most would concur with is that “Life is a bell curve”. In a competitive landscape, here and globally, Singaporeans must better themselves in their respective fields, though not judged against a single, vague yardstick of “intelligence”.

Short-sightedness big reason for elitism here

FROM HO WENG SHIAN

I have always wondered why Singapore continues to struggle with elitism. I always assumed that elitism may have been caused by our educational system, the innate insecurity in our students and parents, and income inequality.

But after reading the letter “Intelligent employees, not degree holders, secure higher salaries” (May 9), I think I had not considered one of the biggest reasons: The short-sightedness within our community.

Saying that “the bottom 90 per cent remain the bottom 90 per cent, whether they have a bachelor’s degree, a master’s or even a doctorate” is an example of prejudicial views that threaten to un-

do efforts to improve social mobility.

To say that those who are unable to enter our universities are “unintelligent” is to jump the gun. They may not have been motivated to “make the cut to local public universities” or may have been late developers.

Instead of closing our minds and brushing off these students, we should encourage them, telling them there is nothing to be ashamed of and that it is merely a case of taking a different road, rather than one of failure.

There are professors, business executives, doctors, lawyers and other top professionals today who used to belong to the “90 per cent” and had gone to a private or overseas university.

Let us keep an open mind, and not put people down carelessly. A pessimistic, elitist attitude reinforces our certificate-driven society.

“There are professors, business executives, doctors, lawyers and other top professionals today who used to belong to the bottom ‘90 per cent’ and had gone to a private or overseas university.”

Any citizen can learn core life-saving skills

FROM V ANANTHARAMAN

Chairman, National Resuscitation Council (NRC)

We agree that automated external defibrillator efforts should not be one-offs (“AED efforts should not be one-off, but part of bigger scheme”; May 5).

In Singapore, nearly 70 per cent of cardiac arrests occur at home. The rest occur in workplaces and public areas. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation and AED (CPR+AED) skills are relevant to all these environments.

Any citizen can learn to become a confident user of these skills. While skills attrition is common, repetitive learning ensures continued confidence and competence, and removes the fear of using the skills to save lives.

CPR+AED can be learnt at any of the current 80 NRC-accredited training centres. Trained instructors wishing to teach and maintain such skills are encouraged to join any of these centres and help train more people.

The NRC has helped organise mass public training sessions, leading to certification of thousands. A two-hour programme to simplify recertification

● **Guidelines on the implementation of CPR+AED at public facilities** can be found on the NRC website: www.nrcsingapore.com.

in these core skills is also available.

It would indeed be good to have visible notices informing the public of the nearest available AED. The NRC will work with various agencies to improve access when the need to save a life arises. The availability of such notices should be coordinated.

The NRC also supports efforts of the Singapore Civil Defence Force and the Singapore Heart Foundation in setting up a national online registry identifying AED locations at public places via the SCDF myResponder app.

Through this, the public can access the location of the nearest AED and register as Community First Responders and be alerted to cardiac arrests in their immediate vicinity.

Owners should take responsibility for maintaining AEDs and ensure that staff with ready access to these are certified in CPR+AED.

The AEDs should be easily accessible for public use. This is one way companies and building owners signify commitment to the public good. Companies may also wish to sponsor AED deployment in other locations.



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- Registration closes on 25th May 2015, 12pm or when registration is full.
- Admission is strictly by pre-registration.
- For HR / Hiring personnel and for Singaporeans only.

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