

Address by the Principal, Ms Agnes Tang at the School Closing Ceremony of 2010-2011 on 6th July , 2011 --- What are in the people that the 21st Century employers value? 3 in 1 Culture for S. C. Gawers!

At the close of this school year, I would like to share with you my reflection after attending a seminar last summer. The title of the seminar was “The Top 21st Century Skills Valued by Employers”. The speaker, Ms Ann Cody White, used to be an editor, reporter and analyst of international trade policy. She is now the director of a renowned career agency (so-called Head-Hunting Company). I was particularly drawn to two issues she raised in her talk, namely, “What are in the people that the 21st Century employers value?” and “How should our students be helped to acquire the skills they need in order to survive and succeed in today’s world?”

People of the 21st Century live in a very different world to that of their fathers. This is the result of globalisation. The world has become smaller and people are more able to collaborate, compete and share with others of different cultures and backgrounds. With increasing competition there is also a rapidly changing world of work. Research points out that people will experience more job changes throughout their lives and so they should equip themselves with a variety of skills in order to be more flexible in adapting to different work environment.

Who are the people 21st Century employers want to find? According to a human resources conference about the “War for Talent”, employers are eagerly looking for “Hi Pot” people, meaning people with high potential. Who are these people? They are people with common sense and good judgement; people who have good work ethics, attitudes and passion; who are glad to take up extra work; who enjoy teamwork and lead projects. They accept global colleagues and are willing to work anywhere in the world. It goes without saying, that they possess good social and communication skills.

Perhaps Professor Bill Coplin has given us a more systematic presentation of the above qualities in his book “10 Things Employers Want You to Learn in College”, published in 2003. Coplin advised college students to equip themselves with ten crucial skills, which are:

1. a good work ethics, behaving well in your job;
2. good physical performance, having a sound mind in a healthy body, staying well, looking good, typing without errors and taking legible notes;
3. speaking well;
4. writing well;
5. working directly with people and building good relationships with them;
6. influencing people, managing efficiently, selling successfully and leading effectively;
7. gathering information;
8. using quantitative tools such as numbers, graphs and spreadsheet programmes;
9. asking and answering the right questions and lastly,
10. solving problems.

Do these sound very familiar to you? Yes, these are exactly the generic skills you are now acquiring at school, so it is never too early for me to tell you that your future employers want to see that you have these skills.

Concerning the second issue, “How can students be helped to acquire these skills?” Ms White advised that students be encouraged to take part in a variety of activities which enable them to have more exposure to the wider world, such as joining exchange programmes, interflows and giving performances. So, refine your presentation skills, do public speaking whenever you have a chance so that you won't feel too shy to speak up. Write down what teachers say in lessons to practise note-taking so that you have no problems in jotting down important points when attending lectures, a meeting or a conference. Do more essay writing because in your writing you review your personality, interests and views, impressing your readers? Learn to use data, surveys and figures as evidence to support your views. Does voluntary work, community service, mix with more people and gain experience in internship to acquire social skills and learn more about the world of work? Needless to say, you should study hard and read extensively to enrich your knowledge and broaden your mind. All these are what we have been doing in this year's major areas of concern which can still be found on the posters at the G/F. From the video

on the Recollection of 2010-2011 which will be shown later, we will have a brief picture of our work in this year. The prizes which marked the impressive records and students' outstanding attainment that we are going to be presented later in the ceremony are all vivid reflection of the given task of the school has fulfilled.

Dear students, in the coming school year we will work on the following 3 major areas of concern (2011-2012). They are:

- 1. Developing students' self-learning capacity for effective learning**
培養學生自學能力達至有效學習
- 2. Enhancing students' competence in English through optimising Language Across Curriculum**
優化跨學科課程以提升學生英語能力
- 3. Cultivating students' virtuous qualities and promoting National Education through joint effort of teaching, discipline & counselling**
教訓輔共同規劃：培養學生個人素質，推動國民教育

I am confident that in an atmosphere of high expectation of S. C. Gaw, backed by consistent encouragement, you are offered the reality of personal achievement and success. To cultivate such a compassionate and positive outlook among S. C. Gawers, I would like to invite all of you to join in a movement of "3 in 1" for the new school year, that is, before you give any comments of suggestions, try to think of 3 strengths or good points first. We aim at nurturing a culture of mutual affirmation, support and rapport.

In this school closing ceremony, may I wish all of you a fruitful and rewarding school year of 2010-2011 and there will be even greater success for the coming school year. Most important of all, there will be more praises in the campus as we are Live to Praise. Thank you!

Questions for students' discussion & self-reflection:

1. Please refer to the list of "10 ten crucial skills" as mentioned by Bill Coplin. Make a simple evaluation of yourself with regard to these skills. Which is your weakest area and which is your strongest? What will you do to improve?
2. What do you want to be in future? What will you do in order to attain your goal?
3. What is "3 in 1" culture?