Learning Journal 1

I wanted to share my reflections about our exploration of philosophical schools this week, particularly focusing on an aspect of Pragmatism that genuinely surprised me.

What struck me most was how closely Pragmatism aligns with Singapore's governance philosophy, something I hadn't considered before. I've always viewed Singapore's policy-making through a purely administrative lens, but studying Pragmatism has helped me understand it from a philosophical perspective.

For instance, I was surprised to learn that Pragmatism emphasizes practical consequences over theoretical ideals. This reminded me of how Singapore approached public housing - instead of adhering to any particular ideological stance, the government focused on what would work effectively to house a growing population. The HDB system wasn't developed based on pure socialist or capitalist principles, but rather through a pragmatic blend that considered practical outcomes above theoretical purity.

This led me to question: Does this pragmatic approach sometimes make us too focused on immediate results at the expense of longer-term ideals? I found myself wondering if there's a balance to be struck between pragmatic solutions and maintaining certain philosophical principles.

I'm also curious about something that wasn't fully covered in our materials - how does Pragmatism view the role of tradition and cultural values? In Singapore's context, we often need to balance pragmatic policy-making with preserving cultural heritage, like in urban development decisions. How would a purely pragmatic approach handle such situations?

One particular concept that confused me was the Pragmatist view on truth. The idea that truth is what "works" seems both practical and potentially problematic. Could you help me understand how Pragmatists would respond to cases where what "works" might conflict with objective facts?

Thank you for introducing these philosophical frameworks. They've given me a new lens through which to view not just abstract concepts, but also the very practical decisions we encounter in our daily lives and national policies.