In ninth grade, I founded my Chinese school’s VEX Robotics team with three classmates. Now, as a senior, I look back on my years in VEX with immense satisfaction. Through VEX I have learned many things; not only did I obtain technical and management skills, but I also learned lessons applicable to the rest of my life.

I learned that hard work is essential for any kind of success. Spending many hours per week doing VEX is challenging due to my busy school schedule. However, I realize that a good robot requires many man-hours, so I sacrificed some leisure time and reorganized my schedule to allot more robotics time.

I also learned how to work well with others. In VEX, most work takes teamwork to be accomplished, so consensus building is critical. If any of us have qualms about something, we talk it out together and then vote on the best way to proceed.

Lastly, I learned to embrace failure, as I’ve found it to be one of life’s best teachers. Throughout several competitions, I’ve experienced malfunctioning programs, motor burnouts, and opponents’ strategies that outplayed my own. I lost several games, but instead of moping, I learned to face failure with an open mind and a determination to learn from my mistakes and improve.

I feel incredibly fortunate to have been exposed to VEX Robotics for so long. The knowledge and experiences I’ve received have been invaluable, and I will carry them with me for the rest of my life.