

**Speech at the Graduation Ceremony**  
**The Chinese Foundation Secondary School**  
**December 13, 2008**

Professor Young, Mr Chow, students and teachers of The Chinese Foundation Secondary School, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is indeed my honour to be invited to this very meaningful occasion of this prestigious school. With a young history of only more than 8 years, The Chinese Foundation Secondary School has risen to be known for its high quality of graduates and its innovations in student learning.

I am particularly honoured because Mr Chow Sik Cheong, the Founding Principal, was my very close classmate at The University of Hong Kong. We did Physics and Mathematics together. We became very close friends. I always remember, at Mr Chow's home, he stayed at the lower level of a double-decker, and he had no desk. Every year, at the beginning of a school year, his father gave him one dollar to buy a small drawing board, which he used to write on his laps on the bed. That might be inconceivable these days in Hong Kong, but that was how our leading scientist and educators were brought up.

Those were the days. I don't believe that yesterday was better than today, but I do think that the wealth of physical materials and

conditions that we enjoy today are no replacement for the zest for learning that are so important for our future.

I suppose you have all heard about “digital divide”. It makes a lot of difference between those who have access to computers and technologies and those who have not. However, there is also a newly emerging concept of “learning divide”, which is about the difference between those who are “learning rich” and those who are “learning poor”.

The “learning rich” refers to those who are not only doing well in schools and universities, but also who are willing and capable of learning throughout their lives, when they encounter new challenges, solve new problems, venture new knowledge, change jobs or even careers, move into new environments, and face different lives at different ages. They ever move on with hope and energy.

The “learning poor” are the exact opposite. They lose their hope and energy in order to move on, because they try to stick with the knowledge, the environments, the jobs and the lives they are familiar with. But everything is changing so quickly. The world does not wait.

However, what do we exactly mean by *learning*? Learning is about books and classrooms, but learning is not only about books and classrooms. Learning is about reading, writing and examinations, but learning is not only about reading writing and

examinations.

We thought learning was about absorption of knowledge, but now we know that learning is not about pouring knowledge into our brains. Learning is about experience. Through experience our brain develops, and we gradually understand more about the world around us. And that is knowledge!

Such an understanding of learning is particularly important today, when knowledge and information are so conveniently obtainable from multiple sources, and memorization of facts and data is no longer important.

Hence the first important message about learning is that we have to learn how to learn on our own. That is self-motivated learning, or in short, learning to learn.

The second message is that learning is not only about knowledge and skills. Learning is also about human lives, about living and working with other people, about managing ourselves, about leading family lives, about moral and ethical dilemmas, about crossing cultures, about relations in the global village, about global issues such as health and climate change, and about philosophy and religions.

This is particularly important when in today's world, organizations are getting smaller, people work more in teams and small groups, human interactions are more extensive and more intensive than ever.

A third message is that learning is no longer about what we know, it is also about the unknown and the uncertain. Learning is also about creation and innovations. Learning is about new discoveries, new explanations, new possibilities and new ventures that we never dreamt about.

I reckoned that The Chinese Foundations Secondary School is indeed a fore-runner in realizing all these new features of learning. The creation of “Enrichment Course”, the emphasis on Creativity, the partnership with real science discoveries, the accomplishments in student activities and student organizations, and the extraordinary attentions to undertakings beyond Hong Kong and China, are all wonderful examples of genuine education that our young people deserve.

Dear Graduates of The Chinese Foundation Secondary School,

I envy you for having spent your schooling years in such an institution of excellence. You would perhaps soon realize that you are the blessed among your peers, and hence you will soon be called upon by society for your leadership.

Tomorrow is yours!

Congratulations!