

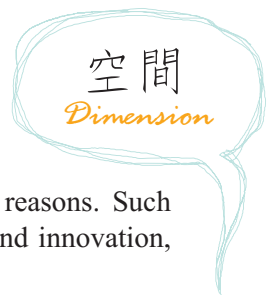
I take great pleasure in writing this Foreword for Dimension, a collection of literary works from students of Po Leung Kuk Laws Foundation College. The wide variety of topics covered by this interesting volume speaks much of the creative and innovative power of the students.

Hong Kong has always been ranked an outstanding commercial city, highly regarded for its efficiency and execution prowess, as well as its superb infrastructure and hardware built-up. However this has not been matched by a similarly high rating when it comes to creativity and innovation. For example, while the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report has confirmed Hong Kong's leading edge in the 'efficiency enhancer' pillars of financial market sophistication and goods market efficiency, the city's overall competitiveness index has been pulled down by its less competitive performance in innovation.

A creative environment hinges not just on hardware investments, but more importantly on the cultivation of the mind, to be ultimately sustained by free thinking, and an education system that encourages learning by critical inquiry rather than by rote, and the appreciation in the arts, culture and the diversity of thought. Education matters, as it is a process of creating knowledge and understanding, and of the capacity to innovate and transform.

Interestingly, our children's creativity is not vastly different from their counterparts around the globe when they are young, as evidenced in the many awards they win in international music, painting, design and writing competitions. However, their creative edges seem to become less prominent over time as they grow up. The logical question to ask is, *"What has gone awry and been missing in our education?"* The answer may partly lie in our education system, and partly be attributable to the value that most Hong Kong people seek. Both forces, when at play, produce the compound effect which thwarts whatever attempts in advancing creativity and innovation.

Induced by a fiercely competitive examination system, our students are prompted to spare less time on art and music appreciation. Even when they are arranged to learn music, art and design by parents, the ultimate



goal is very often to hone their skills for some practical reasons. Such mindsets are in no way conducive to nurturing creativity and innovation, which ask for the ‘luxury’ of time and space.

If every school in Hong Kong can take a small step forward in cultivating creative education, we can look forward to shaping a new generation of young people who will be not only adept at pragmatism, but also possess fine artistic sense and cultural profundity. Take reading as an example, if students are encouraged to read, not for examination, but simply for the pleasure of reading, they can gradually learn to appreciate literature as a distinctive art form, where they will discern various genres, the beauty of language, and the diversity of cultures, apart from having room to stretch their imagination. Through creative education students should learn to think ‘out of the box’, to ask critical questions, and not to be afraid of being unconventional.

I would like to congratulate Po Leung Kuk Laws Foundation College, for making its contribution to promoting creativity and innovation through its publication of *Dimension* and other related school activities.



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