

The Education University of Hong Kong
23rd Congregation
Words of Appreciation by Mr Lee Hong Yin Tommy
(Session 4)

Professor Cheung, distinguished guests, fellow graduates, ladies and gentlemen, good morning!

This is a day of joy and celebration, of happy endings and new beginnings, of families and friends, of achievements and hopes. Thanks to the University for providing me such a precious opportunity to speak on behalf of my fellow graduates. Here, as a representative, may I extend our sincere gratitude to the University for arranging the degree conferral ceremony?

Daniel Levitin, a popular American neuroscientist, once stated that: “We’ve created more information in the last five years than in all of human history before it, and it’s coming at us all the time.” Undoubtedly, in today’s environment of information bombardment, we are drowned with a constant barrage of news and knowledge. It is no longer easy to digest the massive flow of data. It is even more difficult to analyze and make wise decisions amidst conflicting choices.

Therefore, the study of “Liberal Studies” is crucial in leading youngsters to establish a critical thinking habit to analyze and criticize what they get from the media.

Hence, it is absolutely a “must” to retain Liberal Studies in the current secondary school curriculum. As mentioned before, guiding students to analyze social issues in class can help them improve their critical assessment of the diverse images and messages from conflicting sources, as well as develop tolerance in respecting different opinions while forming reasoned arguments. Thus, I see this as a vital factor in maintaining students’ balanced development in both social involvement and moral education.

For my experience in the study of Liberal Studies through those years, other than acquiring knowledge on factual basis, we are led to analyze information in a sensible and systematic way, taking in both objectivity and sincerity as our concerns.

Many of us may have a wrong impression about “Liberal Studies”, which is translated as “通識” in Chinese, meaning “a broad range of knowledge”. Thus, it leads to people’s assumption that those who study Liberal Studies are “walking dictionaries”, hoping that we could answer whatever questions we come across in our daily lives.

In fact, bearing in mind what was said just now, instead of simply delivering tons of hard facts to students, Liberal Studies actually equips students with some very useful training to tackle challenges in the contemporary world.

Throughout the intensive training in our university years, I sincerely believe that all of us have our horizon broadened and our understanding of Hong Kong, China and the world widened. It is because we were constantly trained to process information acquired from different

disciplines such as sociology, political science, history, law, and physical and environmental science. While our commitment to social issues may vary, we have learned to become responsible citizens who strive to make a positive difference in our society.

Last but not least, may I grasp this precious opportunity to thank all our professors and tutors? Not only did they impart knowledge to us, they also inspired us to explore our dreams. Their professionalism and generosity are indeed great examples for us to follow!

On behalf of my fellow graduates, may I thank the University once again for providing us such a valuable opportunity to learn and experience on this campus? As Albert Einstein said, "Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school." In other words, what is essential in education is not simply the acquisition of knowledge, but the transformation in students it brought about. I do really hope what we have learned during these years would be useful to all of us as well as our society. Happy Graduation!

Thank you.