



「二十一世紀香港新一代的成長」專輯

**CONTENTS**

<b>Editorial: How We Have Failed Our New Generation!</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>What Can The Government Do To Help Young People</b>	<b>3</b>
家庭與父母對培養青少年之責任 - 「讓兒童在無暴力的家庭中成長」	5
專題報告: 「二十一世紀香港新一代的成長」研討會	7

**Editorial**

**How We Have Failed Our New Generation!**

Astronaut Yang Li-wei on his visit to Hong Kong once gave three salutes to a large group of young students. He explained: "I salute you because both the Hong Kong of tomorrow and the China of tomorrow will belong to you."

How true this is. Hong Kong will in time be in the hands of our presently young generation. Yet we are hearing laments about how disappointing our younger generation has become: their poor language skills, their lack of confidence, their lack of a goal in life, their addiction to computer games, their careless sex, their disrespect for teachers, their lack of reverence for their seniors, their lawlessness, their proneness to vandalism...

How unfair these laments are if they are meant to be a criticism of the new generation! And how irresponsible are those of us, who have actually contributed to the plight and weaknesses of our younger generation, to put all the blame on the future masters of Hong Kong!

Of course our young men and women, and boys and girls, must learn to take responsibility of their own lives, and must learn to grow out of the difficulties which they are currently facing. They must not blame others for their ills because this will not change the picture. But similarly we adults must not blame our youngsters. We must also see what can be done to make good all the wrongs that we have done.

It is true that language skills are declining. It is true that self-confidence is waning. It is true that many of our young people have lost directions and do not know what to do or what to strive for. It is true that there is much to be desired of the manners of many of our youngsters and of their attitudes.

Yet it was adults, particularly policy makers, who had dictated that our younger generations learn English using the "communicative approach." It was the education authorities that had deprived them of the opportunity to learn the basic rules of grammar. Under the banner of "education reform" bureaucrats

decided that drilling was bad, and went about discouraging or even depriving them of the opportunity of doing sufficient drilling for them to write grammatical English. If they never had the opportunity to learn correct grammar in schools, how can we blame them for their poor English and their lack of confidence?

Education “experts” advised that students were also not supposed to recite any text, and that students should be taught in the mother tongue--unless they could prove themselves adequate for being taught in English. However, after our young students have already formed a habit of thinking and reading and writing in Chinese, fully having the “Chinese mindset” entrenched, at the senior high school level the education authorities allowed schools to switch the language of instruction to English. You can guess the consequences because at senior high school, academic standards are much higher so being able to understand teachers’ explanations is far more important than in the primary school or in kindergarten.

It was the “education experts” who had control over policy that had decided that students should be classified into five bands and be assigned secondary schools accordingly. Having thus imposed great pressures on our kids to drill, they then put the blame on examinations as if examinations were the source of all the pressures. They then invented the “academic aptitude test” intending to alleviate the pressures. Expectedly, this did not work, because the diagnosis was wrong in the first place. Under the banding system, it was not surprising that kids would

drill desperately to prepare for the aptitude test, and ignored training in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

After years of muddling through, the education authorities recently decided that three bands would be better than five and that continuous assessment based on school results, rather than public examinations, should form the basis for classification.

Do they understand the effects of what they are doing? As far as I can see, after all these years they have not really learnt. Our younger generations have become the guinea pigs for their bold but heartless and thoughtless experiments.

While we adults had poorly failed our younger generations, our younger generations remain the hope of Hong Kong. In the Conference organized by the Lingnan Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences, the HK Federation of Youth Groups, and Hong Kong Polytechnic University’s Centre for Social Policy Studies, we have seen samples of very bright minds among our young. We can see that they dream big dreams, and are assertive and 100% human like all young people anywhere. In the face of their energy and active search for a dream, those of us who had done them a disservice must really wake up and do a good review of what we have done.

To put it simply, we must not keep building pressure cookers and leave them inside to cook, and then blame them for being cooked alive!