

## Tuesday English News Report

*Hong Kong schools still **emphasise** exam scores rather than learning*

Broadcast Date: 26th May

To the relief of Secondary Six students, the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education examination has come to an end. The months and years of anxious anticipation for the **high-stakes** exam are finally over. What remains now is the release of results in early July, when each candidate will find out whether they have made it to university.

Besides acceptance into publicly funded universities, it is also worth considering how much students have **benefited** from their studies. As part of the education reform, the new senior secondary curriculum leading to the exam provides for a range of experiences beyond the classroom. These days, students engage in **diverse** experiences through site visits, trips, community services and project-based learning. School life today is supposed to be more colourful and inspiring than ever. But is it?

Letters from students that poured into this paper late last month suggested otherwise. One, who called himself a DSE slave, said he woke up every day at 7am for school, then did more studying after school until "the moon hangs in the sky".

Another **lamented** the pressure accentuated by parents' excessive expectations.

A teacher wrote in, criticising the unreasonably difficult English reading paper in this year's exam.

A talk with a candidate this year gave me the same impression: contrary to the aim of the curriculum design, which is supposed to bring diversity to students' lives, many remain trapped in a tight race, focusing more on examination skills than anything else.

The candidate, who attends an **elite** school, began having tutorial lessons in maths when she was in Secondary Two, received tutoring in English from Secondary Four and in liberal studies from the last term of Secondary Five.

Often the lessons involved drilling in past exam papers and examination skills. The exam she had just sat **convinced** her of the importance of answering questions properly.

In English, for example, she was taught to follow certain sentence structures, and avoid using **clichés** such as "every cloud has a silver lining". Clichés cause one to lose, rather than gain marks, she was told. She said there are also "secrets" to tackling other exams, but she would not disclose them. "Sometimes, I thought it was enough just to go to a tutorial school," she **quipped**.

At one point, the **preoccupation** with getting high exam scores led her to question the purpose of studying, as well as the meaning of life, she added.

The same feeling could be shared by many others caught in a competitive system.



### 1. What do you think?

## 2. Vocabulary

Fill in the blanks in the sentences below using words from the box.

emphasise	high-stakes	benefited	diverse
lamented	elite	convinced	clichés
quipped	preoccupation		

1. He really believed - in fact he was \_\_\_\_\_ - that aliens had abducted his pet cat.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ students go to the best universities and often get very high-paid jobs.
3. I would like to \_\_\_\_\_ the importance of reading as good preparation for the HKDSE English exam.
4. This is a \_\_\_\_\_ test. This means that if you pass, the consequences can be extremely important.
5. The students \_\_\_\_\_ from doing extra English classes after school as they got higher marks in the final exam.
6. “At the end of the day”, “It’s not my cup of tea” and other expressions that are overused are known as \_\_\_\_\_.
7. He has a \_\_\_\_\_ with cleanliness and hygiene. He washes his hands 10 time a day and showers in the morning and before going to bed.
8. She \_\_\_\_\_ means she said a clever, witty or funny remark.
9. London is one of the most culturally \_\_\_\_\_ cities in the world. Many people from many different countries live there.
10. She \_\_\_\_\_ the fact that so many of her friends had moved away from Hong Kong. It left her feeling so sad.

### **BREAKING NEWS!**

#### **THE ENGLISH ROOM IS OPEN FOR LUNCH!**

**Have your lunch in the English Room from Wednesday to Friday (Open from 12:00-1:00).**

#### **THE ENGLISH CAFÉ IS OPEN!**

 **FREE COFFEE / HOT CHOCOLATE WITH MR. LANE!**

**When: Every Tuesday lunchtime from 12:00-1:00pm**

**Where: The English Corner (Room B001B by the basketball court)**

**Have a free drink with Mr. Lane, check the answers to the Tuesday News report and talk about life in general!**