

2018 DSE Part B Q5 (Learning English through Debating)

Q: You are representing your school at an inter-school debating competition. The motion is 'The policy of reporting students' class position should be abolished'. Write a debate speech arguing for OR against the motion

Lv5** M1:21 M2:19 40/42

Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, today's motion is the policy of reporting students' class position should be abolished. Recently, this issue has aroused wide concern within various circles and provoked a stir among the locals. The advocates put forward the idea that abolishing the policy of reporting students' class position helps safeguard the mental health of the adolescents, while the skeptics insist that this policy serves as a vital role in motivating students to study. Divergent as the arguments are, it is my firm conviction that the policy of reporting students' class position should certainly be abolished and today's motion must stand.

There is no shortage of reasons for my stance. Among all these, probably the first recurring to my mind is that abolishing the policy serves as an indispensable role in enhancing students' mental health and their stress levels would be decimated significantly after the policy is abolished. Nowadays, it has become an omnipresent phenomenon that students suffer from exceedingly high workload pressure and expectations under the

exam-oriented education system. It is also demoralizing to know that the suicide rate of adolescents in Hong Kong has been exponentially increasing and more than 60% of the secondary school students are facing a myriad of mental health problems ranging from depression to autism according to the research conducted by the University of Hong Kong. In view of this deplorable trend, we should not turn a blind eye to the thorny problem and abolishing the policy of reporting students' class position can exactly eradicate the problem. After abolishing the policy, they will no longer suffer from tremendous pressure as their class positions are not announced and they do not have to strive to pass their exams with flying colors in a bid to get recognition from their peers and teachers. Apart from that, what is also worthy of our attention is that abolishing the policy helps the adolescents attain a sense of security, especially for the ones who are not academically inclined. All in all, abolishing the policy can effectively help the students keep their depression and other negative emotions, as well as suicide ideation at bay.

Alongside enhancing the mental health of the adolescents, under no circumstances should we overlook the fact that abolishing the policy can indisputably bolster students' confidence, cultivate their self-worth and

reinforce their self-esteem. Under the current education system, students who are not exam-savvy and weak in memorizing facts may consider themselves as 'losers' when they perform poorly in their exams. It is an irrefutable fact that they have shattered confidence and low self-esteem. The presence of the policy of reporting students' class position further aggravates the problem as those who are not scholastically superior may face discrimination or stigmatization by their peers. In severe cases, after their peers acknowledging their class rankings, their peers may mock at them and think that they are 'clumsy', thus increasing their confusion, pressure and emotional stress drastically. Under this line of thinking, the existing policy of reporting students' class positions not only puts their mental health in jeopardy, but also deteriorates students' self-esteem as they would suffer from poor social life and tremendous pressure under the policy. It is self-evident that the policy should be abolished in order to help the students acquire a sense of affiliation from healthy social life, as well as to boost their confidence and re-establish their self-esteem.

Last but not least, abolishing the policy of reporting students' class position serves as a catalyst to accelerate the progress in cultivating more well-rounded individuals. Nowadays, it is a ubiquitous phenomenon that

teachers, parents and teenagers attach inordinate importance to academic results, and students keep regurgitating facts and catering answers specifically to marking schemes in order to achieve outstanding results. The rampant tutoring industry striving to let students be fully equipped with exam skills has further added fuel to the problem. In view of the alarming situation, it is essential for schools to abolish the policy of reporting students' class positions as it can help change the perception that 'academic performance is above everything'. Abolishing the policy indirectly shows that schools not only pose emphasis on academic results, but also value students' personal development. It is also important for us to take a glance at the fact that abolishing the policy can instill correct concepts into students that being exam-savvy does not translate into functionality and academic results are not the sole criterion in determining whether the person is successful or not. It is also beyond dispute that schools can better unleash students' potential in art or music after abolishing the policy and allow every student to experience success and flourish. Furthermore, abolishing the policy can help leverage the diversity of our workforce as students' potentials can be unearthed when academic results are no longer the only focus.

Some critics may counter my stance, asserting that the policy of reporting

students' class position is crucial in motivating the students to study harder. This claim may seem reasonable on the surface, but upon closer examination, it does not make much sense. Undeniably, the policy can churn out more talents who are exam-savvy and push them to pay full attention to their academic results. Yet, does that mean the aggregate of those scholastically superior kids can result in a more dynamic economy, a creative population, a superior society? I am sure that the answer is certainly no. In contrast, abolishing the policy not only helps enhance the mental health of the adolescents, but also diversifies the working population, which minimizes the likelihood of economic depression in Hong Kong.

Judging from the above well-documented analysis, it is my firm belief that the policy of reporting students' position imposes far-reaching and negative impacts on both students and the community as a whole. With this in mind, it is patently obvious that the policy should be abolished as soon as possible, so that Hong Kong can thereby be widely recognized as an international metropolis in return. Thank you.

Lv 5**

C:7 L:7 O:7

2012 DSE Q9

Q: Your school magazine is going to include a special feature on mental health. Recently, one of your friends was suffering from depression. Write an ARTICLE for the school magazine
<1> about your friend's depression and <2> how he/she overcame it.
<3> Give advice to others on how to help fight depression.

3 THINGS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR ESSAY😊:

<1>:

- why did your friend suffer from depression?
- what problems did your friend encounter?

<2>:

- seek help from the professionals
- moderate exercise
- join more extra-curricular activities

<3>: (can actually overlap with <2>)

- practice medication techniques (yoga, deep breathing, meditation)
- eat a healthy diet
- join a support group for depression

Face it Bravely! ----- The Key to Fighting Depression

There is only one thing more staggering than Hong Kong's mind-blowing economic metamorphosis in the past few years, and it is the still widespread ignorance about the problem of depression. It is an omnipresent phenomenon that people in Hong Kong suffer from depression, not to mention that the number of people suffering from it has been exponentially increasing. Probably one of the contributory factors to this deplorable trend is the exorbitantly fast pace of life of Hong Kong residents given that Hong Kong is an international metropolitan city. However, under no circumstances should we overlook the fact that the relatively low awareness about maintaining mental health among people further aggravates the problem. After much deliberation in the long run, it is my firm conviction that comprehensive strategies should be put forward in order to tackle the thorny problem as it will undeniably bring a myriad of far-reaching impacts to the community ranging from residents having declining quality of life to enterprises suffering from shrinking workforce and diminishing productivity

if we **let the problem become a vicious circle** by looking on with folded arms. In this article, I will give three pieces of advice to all of you on how to fight depression and share my friend's experience.

There are actually numerous solutions that can fight against depression. Among all these, the first recurring to my mind is to set achievable goals. When you are depressed, you may feel like you cannot accomplish anything. Setting daily achievable goals plays a **vital** role in re-establishing your self-esteem and **boosting** your confidence. **A flawless illustration of the viewpoint is that** my friend, Jane, **was** at first **plagued by** the problem of depression and overcoming the problem was insurmountably difficult for her. Yet, after consulting a host of social workers and psychologists, she tried to set daily attainable and feasible goals like **doing 30 to 60 minutes of aerobic exercise every day, engaging in advanced studies and attending extra-curricular activities such as Dance Generation's Hip Hop course, Hong Kong's Triathlon Association's training course**, to name but a few, in order to nurture her talents in

various aspects. After several weeks, she has successfully developed a positive sense of self and reconstructed her self-assurance. With this in mind, setting goals and accomplishing them is **irrefutably** a good way to **alleviate** the problem of depression as it **not only** enables you to have a higher sense of achievement and satisfaction, **but also** helps unleashing your potentials.

It is also beyond dispute that having enough rest and doing moderate exercise plays an **indispensible** role in fighting depression. Nowadays, it is a **ubiquitous phenomenon** that people attach inordinate importance to students' academic results. As a result, adolescents are often overburdened with **exceedingly** high expectations and workload pressure. Students are so focused on acing their exams so as to gain recognition from their peers and teachers. They have hectic schedules with **a vast number** of tutorial classes and they always burn the midnight oil. Hence, **it is self-evident that** they lack time for relaxation and entertainment. From my point of view, having at least 60 minutes of rest every day is an effective solution to

mitigate the problem of depression, and having not enough relaxation is tantamount to undermining students' physical and mental health. I am not justifying that you should certainly not be snowed under with homework, tutorial classes, and strive to pass the public exam with flying colors, but giving zero entertainment and rest to yourself is equally detrimental to your personal growth. Apart from having enough rest, doing moderate exercise serves as a catalyst to accelerate the progress in overcoming depression. My friend, Jane, not only participated in yoga class and Hip Hop course, but also insisted on doing HIIT workout every day at home. She claimed that exercise is a distraction for her that can get her away from the cycle of negative thoughts that feed anxiety and depression. In fact, exercising makes you feel happier and there are actually some medical proofs. Regular exercise helps you ease depression in releasing feel-good brain chemicals like endorphins, and also in reducing immune system chemicals that can worsen depression. The fact that regular exercise helps people maintain their physical health is universally acknowledged,

yet, we should not overlook the fact that it is also **crucial** to keep people mentally healthy.

Last but not least, seek appropriate treatment and help from the professionals if you need! Depression can leave a person feeling **lethargic**, unmotivated, or hopeless. In severe cases, depression can lead to suicidal ideation. Unfortunately, stigma surrounding depression inhibits many people from seeking treatment as an individual with depression may be viewed as flawed or weak. Nonetheless, seeking professional assistance and treatment can help you identify the source of depression and it is the only way that will successfully address your **crux of problem**. Jane had feelings of inadequacy and grief, but she had completely no idea what the underlying reasons that contributed to her depression were. **After finding help from various professionals, she figured out that it was actually the tremendous pressure resulting from not being capable of achieving outstanding academic results that got her extremely depressed.**

All in all, it is **of paramount importance** to maintain good

mental health as you will not have a healthy body if you do not take good care of your mind. **It is patently obvious that** it is worth giving the thumbs-up to the idea that we should fight depression and other negative emotions bravely. **It is earnestly hoped that** the government departments can **make a concerted effort** to ignite the public awareness of keeping good mental health, instead of adopting a wait-and-see approach, as the problem of depression in society is so **acute** that the government must take prompt action to **eradicate** it. As an individual, we should value ourselves and make every **endeavor** to keep ourselves healthy, both physically and mentally.

Lv 5**

C:7 L:7 O:7

2016 DSE Q4

Q: It has recently been reported that some parents in Asian countries are installing apps on their children's mobile phones that monitor their activities to ensure that they use these devices responsibly. Write a letter to the Young Post stating whether you agree with these parents' actions or not. Justify your position with three reasons.

BRAINSTORMING☺:

AGREE:

- help parents keep their children away from the social media sites that are exposed to *cyber bullying, sex and porn*.
- help limit the number of hours their children spend on their phones
~>help them establish good study habits at home
- track the child's location anytime ~> protect them from dangerous situations encountered outside home

DISAGREE:

- severely harm the child's privacy
- children might feel that their parents don't trust them ~> pose risks to the relationship between parents and child
- there are limitations for tracking and monitoring apps (not possible to protect children from all risks)

Dear Editor,

Recently, the issue of whether parents should install apps on their children's mobile phones that monitor their activities to ensure that they use these devices responsibly **has aroused wide concern among various circles** and **provoked a stir among the locals**. The advocates put forward the idea that installing these apps is a sign of good parenting, while the skeptics including some psychologists and privacy experts insist that such acts can harm parent-child relationships. Divergent as the arguments are, it is my firm belief that parents should not monitor what their children do online by installing apps.

There is no shortage of reasons for my stance. Among all these, the first recurring to my mind is that humans need privacy, even children. No one should feel that everything they are doing is being monitored, particularly when they haven't done anything wrong. It is understandable that some parents are worried about their kids doing bad things on the Internet, but **it is an undeniable fact that** parents stalking their kids by installing apps on their children's mobile phones fails to address

the **fundamental problem** and it is certainly not an effective and long-term solution. **According to the research conducted by the University of Hong Kong, children whose parents constantly stalk what they do, looking over their shoulder and reading every message and Google search, are the ones who have a higher tendency to rebel.** They will grow sick of having no privacy and overprotective parents, and they will be much more likely to attempt bad things outside their parents' watch. In view of this, **isn't it preposterous for some advocates to uphold the claim that** it is necessary to install the apps in order to monitor and safeguard the kids given that they haven't done any inappropriate things? **I am not justifying that** children should not be educated not to overuse their phones and **be instilled correct concepts of** online safety, **but** spying on the kids using apps that severely harm the children's privacy is equally detrimental to their personal growth.

Alongside harming the kid's privacy, **under no circumstances should we overlook the fact that** installing such apps on children's mobile phones poses risks to the relationship between

parent and child. If a parent does not tell the child they are being monitored, and the child finds out, this is likely to be experienced as a breach of trust. One of the widely recognized features of trust is that it takes time to build, but can be easily broken and once broken can be extremely difficult to rebuild.

After installing the apps, parents can spend hour upon hour examining photos on Instagram or Facebook of their children and checking every single messages of their children with their friends. It is patently obvious that the adolescents may suffer from depression or anxiety, not to mention they may also develop hatred towards their parents. For sure, there is no foolproof way to prevent your children from getting into trouble.

In fact, it will probably happen no matter what you do. But respecting the children and giving them some degree of privacy will allow the parents to forge a much stronger relationship with their children based on mutual trust, instead of them seeing their moms and dads simply as evil dictators who they must work to avoid. It is beyond dispute that mutual respect is a contributory factor to the enhancement of cohesion among the

family members. In light of this, **it is self-evident that** parents should not monitor their kids by installing apps on their mobile phones.

Last but not least, it is **of paramount importance** that we notice the fact that there are numerous limitations for tracking and monitoring apps. Companies that make the apps trade on an assumption that it is possible to protect children from all risks and that the way to do this is to watch every move so as to **avert** or **intercept** potential harm. Yet, **it goes against the growing body of evidence that shows that** children are losing the very skills they need to navigate the world and deal with the genuine risks they will encounter. This is not to say that parents should blindly trust their children and neglect their responsibility to protect them from danger. On the contrary, every child needs to be better educated and supported in working out how to safely negotiate their way around social media, online gaming, email and texting, which is, with no doubt, the most comprehensive and long-term solution to **mitigate** the existing problem of online safety.

Judging from the above well-documented analysis, it is my firm conviction that parents should not install apps on their children's devices to monitor their activity, instead, we should give the thumbs-up to the idea that parents should foster more in-depth communication with their children and infuse correct concepts of using the mobile devices appropriately into them. It is earnestly hoped that parents will not install apps that monitor their children anymore as it not only infringes on their beloved children's privacy, but also damages the parent-child relationships.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Wong

Chris Wong