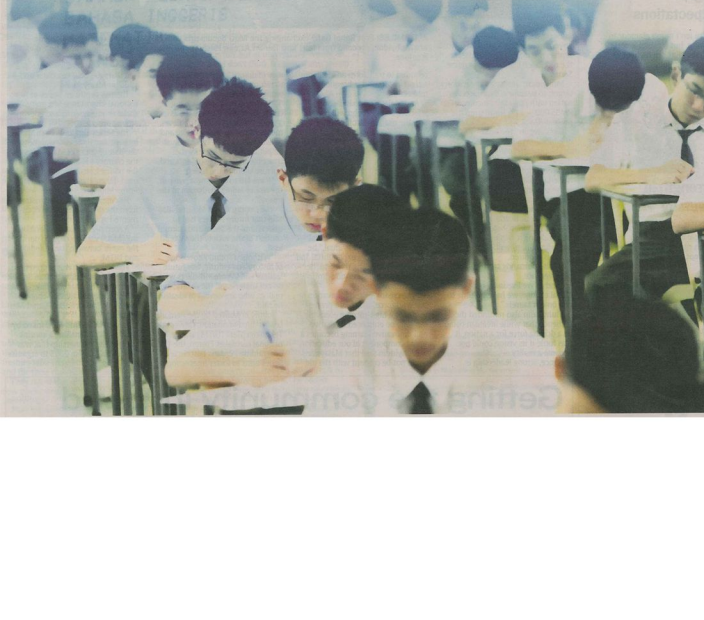


education

To test or not to test

Public exams are an integral part of the Malaysian education system, but how crucial are they to the learning process? >E7, 8 & 9



Ensuring standards are kept

By KAREN CHAPMAN
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MUCH interest has been generated since the proposal to abolish the Ujjian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) and Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) was made. Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said on June 20 that the two examinations could be abolished to remove the pressure of an examination-based education system on students. He said the ministry was studying the change and urged scholars, educationists and various stakeholders to provide input. Newspapers have been inundated with letters to the editor with suggestions on whether these two examinations should be retained or abolished.



Dr Wan Zahid is urging the Education Ministry to retain UPSR and PMR.

There have also been calls to look into how many public examinations students should sit, once they are in the school system and whether examinations were necessary. Former education director-general Tan Sri Dr Wan Zahid Mohd Norudin said there was a need to understand the UPSR and PMR. "We are about evaluation. The ministry does not call the instruments exams, but they are very clear about the technical difference between evaluation and examination," he said in an interview. Dr Wan Zahid said there was a technical reason why the PMR replaced the SP (Peperiksaan Sijil Rendah Pelajaran) and LCS (Lower Certificate of Education Examination). "This is because examination is summative in its nature (an assessment given at a particular point of time to gauge the person's knowledge) at a certain point, while evaluation is formative so that remedial measures can still be taken. "PMR was changed from SP to make the assessment formative in general, so that remedial measures can be taken. "It should be such because SP is no longer terminal," he explained. The PMR assessment should provide critical feedback to the school for remedial or enrichment purposes. "This is because after sitting for the PMR, students automatically proceed to Form Four while previously the SP was terminal, meaning that nothing could be done if students failed," he said. Dr Wan Zahid felt that unfortunately "we have not been able to completely achieve the formative intention of the PMR, so we need to become summative and normative." He suggested injecting some criterion-referenced test (CRT) components into UPSR and PMR. "The current Faridun Ain assessment as an example, he said 7 items were considered a most knowledge for all Muslims. "There is no grade - only completed or not completed, so you get 16 correct out of 17, it means you have completed Faridun Ain. "In normative assessment, you will get an A but in CRT you have not completed it," he said. Dr Wan Zahid urged that UPSR and PMR be retained.

With academic achievement overshadowing all other aspects of holistic education in Malaysia, it is time to re-assess our assessment system.

Stories by KAREN CHAPMAN, TAN SHOW CHIN and TAN EE LOO
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As some point in their schooling life, every student is likely to experience a form of evaluation, assessment or examination. These paper-based tests are used to ensure that students of the same level have achieved the objectives of the education system they are a part of. The bad aspect of exams is that they are not holistic. They are not assessing the student's learning process, but only the final product of their learning. The UPSR and PMR are no exception. They are not assessing the student's learning process, but only the final product of their learning. The UPSR and PMR are no exception. They are not assessing the student's learning process, but only the final product of their learning.



Exams in the Malaysian education system are designed to pick up the best rote learners, although memory work is only one small aspect of the learning process.

It is time to re-assess our assessment system. We need to move away from a system that only tests rote learning and towards a system that assesses the student's learning process. We need to move away from a system that only tests rote learning and towards a system that assesses the student's learning process. We need to move away from a system that only tests rote learning and towards a system that assesses the student's learning process.

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Nowadays, we are talking a lot about authentic learning and authentic assessment. This is, essentially, about learning that is not just for the sake of learning, but learning that is meaningful. This is, essentially, about learning that is not just for the sake of learning, but learning that is meaningful.

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Should they stay or go?



With less emphasis on scoring AAs, students will have more time for other pursuits like sports. - File photo

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Decision soon on exams



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deprived of further learning," he said. Teachers need to be trained so that they can provide a better learning experience for their students. This is a good thing. It means that students will have more time to spend on their hobbies and interests. This is a good thing. It means that students will have more time to spend on their hobbies and interests.

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