

**Bleak future awaits us if we abolish exams**  
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The Education Minister, just like ministers before, floated the idea of abolishing UPSR and PMR exams. I notice one common thread among education ministers: they like to toy with the education of children and come up with crazy ideas.

We turned the education system upside down when the medium of instruction was suddenly switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia. Practically a whole generation of pupils suddenly had to learn all the school subjects in Bahasa Malaysia. What was the result? Most of the graduates churned out from our public universities had paper qualifications but could not communicate in proper English in interviews in the private sector.

Hence, they had to be absorbed into the public service. And those who wished to work in the private sector had to learn English at extra cost running into millions of ringgit yearly so as to make them employable. Re-training became the norm. This waste would not have come about if the minister had considered all angles before making the switch.

Moreover, our people who go overseas to promote trade and negotiate and sign agreements are handicapped because of their English deficiency. Thus, they lose out to leaders in other countries who could communicate well with their counterparts. A lot of time is wasted in trying to understand agreements which are usually in English. Mind you, the English version is the only acceptable version in case of discrepancy.

After some decades of decline in the English language, the then prime minister decided to use English in the teaching of Science and Mathematics. This went on for some years. With a new minister in charge, it was decided to change back to Bahasa Malaysia.

And before this, there was another change: an open certificate for the SPM. No grade 1, 2 or 3. Even with one subject was passed, a candidate could get a certificate. To get into a course, he should have a certain number of credits. Grading will ensure that candidates will be competitive and will try to attain a reasonable standard of success in a certain number of SPM subjects.

So, I would suggest that the grading system should be enforced from next year onwards. An open certificate is a no-go.

What we should do is this: instead of abolishing UPSR and SPM, we should go one step further by having monthly tests. To reduce some stress, probably we could allocate 40% marks from monthly tests and 60% marks for the year-end exam.

Educationists and parents should know the consequences of abolishing exams. Indiscipline would be a daily torture for teachers. No exam means no study. Are we going to give an open certificate to a student who has warmed his seat for 11 years? And what sort of knowledge has he gained if he does not bother to study?

And what is worse is that lazy students may skip classes and loiter in supermarkets and smoke cigars. Teachers and parents will then face social problems. Without proper education and without attaining knowledge, what sort of future will students have when they leave school? No future at all.

Let us not play dice with our children's education and their future welfare. Taking the

popular stance of abolishing exams and by scoring political points, educationists and politicians are inviting problems in schools and later in society when students leave school.

So, think deep, wide, long and far. A very bleak future awaits us if we abolish exams. Soon, we may think of abolishing university exams as well. That will be the height of tragedy for our education system.

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