

Exercise 8:

a) here are three major problems discussed in the newspaper reports in the boxes below associated with GCSE Chinese examination. What are they? Discuss and write a short report of the problems raised by the newspaper articles.

b) How do you think those problems can be fixed? Make a list of recommendations to the institutions, teachers and the government.

Box 1

Cyndi Nguyen was shut out of two associate degree programmes because she could not get her Chinese examination results in time.

After she received her Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) exam results last Monday, the 18-year-old went immediately to the University of Hong Kong's community college to apply for the programmes in nursing and biomedical sciences.

The enrolment centre told her the nursing programme was full, and that she could not apply for the biomedical sciences programme before she received the results of her General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Chinese exam on August 22.

But by then, places in most programmes - which have been open to applicants since Monday - would have long been taken up.

Most minority pupils take the GCSE Chinese exam because they cannot handle the more difficult HKDSE test. Usually, they sit the exam a year before they graduate to get the results in time.

SCMP news report, July 22, 2013

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/article/1287905/ethnic-pupils-one-step-behind>

Box 2

Pakistani-Filipino Mashal Khalid wants to get into the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Hong Kong. The 16-year-old got A* in Chinese in the lower-level GCSE. But the grade means her Chinese language proficiency is only equivalent to that of a local in early primary school. To stay competitive in the university admission process, she may have to spend HK\$4,080 to sit for the GCE, a higher-level overseas exam. The fee, which is eight times more than locals pay to sit for the exam for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education, is often too expensive for many ethnic minority families struggling to make ends meet. Our society can ill-afford to waste human capital because of skin colour. Being educationally underprivileged may lead to life-long inequality in career opportunities and advancement. It would be a pity if high fees deter ethnic minority students from sitting for more advanced exams, putting them at a disadvantage. Students should be differentiated by their ability, not by their financial background. No capable students should be deprived of a chance to study due to a lack of money.

SCMP news report, February 18, 2012

<http://www.scmp.com/article/992962/costly-exams-put-equality-test>