

SED on national security education and HKDSE Examination History paper

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, and Deputy Secretary for Education, Mrs Hong Chan Tsui-wah, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (May 23):

Reporter: What would be the EDB's role in strengthening national security education? And can you explain why cancelling the History examination question is the only viable solution? Thank you.

Secretary for Education: The National People's Congress has decided to legislate for a new national security law which would be applicable to Hong Kong. We fully support this decision. One of the follow-up that they mentioned is about education on national security in Hong Kong. I think this is more than just school education. It is also about the whole education in the whole community because I believe every citizen also has the responsibility to ensure national security. In schools, of course, when the law is enacted and implemented, we will see how to explain to our students the essence of the law and also the underlying principles to them in our curriculum.

Reporter: The second question is about cancelling the History examination question. Why do you think it's the only viable solution?

Deputy Secretary for Education: The question by design has serious faults. It is not compatible with the History curriculum objectives and the information provided there does not fall into the level of understanding of the students. Because within the curriculum the main emphasis is on the invasion by Japan and, in a very rare case, school teachers would touch upon the economic invasion, literally speaking. But the information provided in the question seemed to lead students to believe that there are merits or good done by the Japanese. So that is, by itself, misleading. Students have not learned this within the curriculum and in the classroom. It is very difficult for them to judge the intricacies of the information provided to arrive at a reliable judgement. So very often they just based on the information to come up with a very superficial understanding, just like doing a comprehension exercise to believe that Japan had done some good to China but that is not true because the problem is that there are malicious intention behind and some historians would regard that as some forms of economic invasions. The information therein are not reliable, not reflected the true picture. So it is very difficult to come up with a reliable marking scheme. From the assessment point of view, for a question with serious faults in design, you cannot come up with a reliable, objective marking scheme to differentiate students. I give an example, if we have a student who comes up with just a few words saying that for that period many Chinese suffered from the Japanese invasion and we can come up with an idea about the good done by the Japanese. So that would be a very short answer. But that reflected his genuine understanding of

the key historical views within that period. But you cannot count the number of points about the good done by the Japanese against the harm done by the Japanese. So it's not that level of comparison, it's not counting the number of points and a balanced treatment. So the design of the question has serious faults. And that's why you cannot come up with a reliable marking scheme to differentiate students. For those who have a thorough understanding, maybe they just come up with a very strong view about the Japanese invasion without mentioning any benefits. We have thought about that from this perspective and all the reasons are detailed in the panel paper. You can make reference to them.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)