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Hong Kong students don't need to pay the price for perfection

Nowadays, in Hong Kong, a child's achievement is tied to their family's glory. In an effort to stand out from the crowd, children have been trained from an early age to get as many advantages as they can. For example, they will join many extracurricular activities or academic groups to keep up with their peers.

Recently, an interesting phenomenon has arisen: the public considers Hong Kong students to be exam perfectionists. As a student in this city, I thoroughly understand this, though it is not a good trend to see.

What motivates so many Hong Kong students in our studies? Parents often have high expectations for their children and place a lot of pressure on them to do well. They strongly believe that education is the best way for their children to move up the social ladder.

Thus, most children are afraid of letting down their parents, and shame and guilt fuel their hard work in school. We have to work hard to make our parents proud of us.

Hong Kong's education system is quite different from the ones in the United States, Britain and elsewhere. For example, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) in other countries prepares students for working in these fields. It requires students to develop analytical thinking, and motivates them to think more critically about the things around them.

Students in Hong Kong have fewer opportunities to try this kind of learning curriculum. Most local schools here mainly focus on teaching pupils to learn the material to do well on exams. Classrooms use learning resources that focus on key points, so students can understand the content as easily as they can. Students achieve good results but may miss out on learning opportunities outside exams.

The educational philosophy in Hong Kong also emphasises diligence. There is a lot of homework, and exercises are about learning through repetition. On the contrary, other countries are more likely to have a "learn more, teach less" method, which helps students learn in a more relaxed and comfortable environment.

The pace of teaching in Hong Kong's classrooms is too fast. Learning should be like digesting food in our stomach. Taking in food or information quickly and in large quantities is not beneficial for our bodies or our minds. Most students cannot learn new things within too short of a time. Even if students do well on exams, they do not understand why they should learn and study. Is knowledge only useful for coping with exams?

Furthermore, spoon-feeding education hurts students. This refers to when students are just taught based on exams, with the assumption that all questions have only one answer.

This method lacks inspiration and versatility. Students are learning with no purpose as if they are robots. They lose interest and curiosity about learning. This type of knowledge will seldom be useful in the future.

It is a pity that so many of us Hong Kong students have been misinformed about the purpose of our studies. Therefore, we must improve our education system so future generations can have an educational experience that inspires them to love learning because they see how their knowledge can benefit society.

