

2014 HCI C2 Preliminary Examination
Paper 2 Answer Scheme

1. Suggest why the author describes our faith in competition as 'religious' (line 4). Use your own words as far as possible. (1)

Lift	Paraphrase
our religious faith in competition has promised fabulous efficiencies, miraculous economies and dazzling innovation.	<p>The author is suggesting that our belief in competition is analogous to that of the faith of a religious disciple/devotee/follower in that it is unwavering/ absolute/unflinching /completely devoted</p> <p>(allow more pejorative interpretations such as unquestioning /irrational /blind /misguided /fanatical) since we have complete confidence in its incredible/wondrous/unbelievable (note the word 'miraculous') powers. (1 mark)</p>

2. In the first paragraph, what does the author mean when she says we are 'gasping for air' (line 6)? Use your own words as far as possible. (1)

Lift	Paraphrase
...we find ourselves gasping for air in a sea of corruption, dysfunction, environmental degradation, waste and inequality.	<p>The author means that, inundated by countless problems, we are desperately/frantically struggling to survive/barely managing to 'keep our heads above water'/almost overwhelmed (in an environment plagued with innumerable grievous problems/difficulties)</p> <p>* Accept if students merely explain this as a metaphor comparing us to swimmers drowning in a sea of troubles</p> <p><i>(contextual paraphrase in brackets not required BUT student must convey the dire nature of our predicament i.e. we are metaphorically 'drowning'/ barely able to stay afloat in a tempestuous sea of troubles).</i> (1 mark)</p>

3. Why is 'fishing with dynamite' (line 13) an appropriate way to describe how many company's pursue growth? Use your own words as far as possible. (2)

Lift	Paraphrase
The measure of a company's success (or the status of its CEO) is size, and growth is routinely pursued with myopic, reckless and often disproportionate strategies . This is what the legal scholar Lynn Stout calls "fishing with dynamite".	<p>(The pursuit of growth by a company is compared to the practice of some fishermen who use dynamite to catch fish. Not only is such a method excessive/unnecessary, in the process, they also destroy the marine ecosystem, as well as risk injuring/killing themselves)</p> <p>It is an appropriate analogy as both companies and fishermen employ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • short-sighted (myopic), • dangerous/irresponsible (reckless) • 'sledge-hammer' tactics (disproportionate) • to achieve their immediate/selfish goals without considering the wider implications or long-term destructive consequences of their actions. <p>(1/2 mark per bullet BUT the student needs to incorporate the analogy)</p> <p><i>NB. Students may simply 'guess' why the fishing with dynamite analogy is appropriate without specifically referring to the preceding key words of myopic/reckless/disproportionate – allow this provided they have the right ideas.</i></p>

4. According to the author, what are the harmful effects of companies lowering prices to increase their market share? Use material from paragraph 3 only. Use your own words as far as possible. (2)

Lift	Paraphrase
... usually they are pushed down to the most vulnerable	The expenses involved in the production will be passed on to the most susceptible/weakest groups
producing an increasingly exploited, disempowered and pauperised workforce.	they are unfairly taken advantage of losing their rights as workers / becoming more disenfranchised/subjugated /oppressed and destitute/impoverished
...unravel social fabric	weakening/eroding/undermining/deteriorating communal ties/ social (allow) harmony/cohesion
(½ per point up to a maximum of four points)	

5. “Such phenomena are conveniently explained in the jargon of mainstream economists as “perverse outcomes” (lines 22-3). What is the author implying here? Explain carefully. Use your own words as far as possible. (2)

Lift	Paraphrase
Such phenomena are conveniently ‘explained’ in the jargon of mainstream economists as ‘perverse outcomes’, but they are, in fact, entirely inevitable and natural consequences of competition.	The author is suggesting that economists are deliberately (and glibly) using specialized terms which are difficult for the public to understand (1) to defend the present system (‘perverse outcomes’ suggests that the pernicious effects of competition are merely unintended/indirect/accidental side- effects/aberrations). They are trying excuse the inexcusable/ rationalize the unacceptable / defend the indefensible/ hide/ ‘sanitize’/ side-step /‘sugar-coat’ an extremely unpleasant and unpalatable truth – that this is not, as they suggest, merely an unfortunate and accidental side-effect, but an inherent and unavoidable result of the system itself. (1) <i>NB. Be generous here: award 1 mark for an appreciation of the method (conveniently ‘explained’ in jargon) and the other for the intent)</i>

6. Explain the differences between data spinning, culling, and fabrication (line 54). Use your own words as far as possible. (2)

Lift	Paraphrase
data spinning	slanting/ manipulation/twisting/ of information to present a favourable/ positive perspective of the issue/to one’s advantage/to suit one’s cause
culling	selective/partial destruction/removal/discarding of (obviously unfavourable) information
fabrication	deliberate falsification/manufacturing/concoction/counterfeiting/inventing of information
(1 point – 0m, 2 points – 1m, 3 points – 2m)	

7. Explain the author’s use of ‘conceivably’ in line 66. (1)

Lift	Paraphrase
His research revealed that although some people said they still valued sport for the lessons it could conceivably teach: fair play, collaboration, integrity, and discipline, the vast majority believed that all that really mattered was winning.	The author uses the adverb to indicate that what follows is quite possible/ believable/plausible : i.e. we are all capable of imagining the fact that, by its very nature, sport could certainly inculcate the virtues she proceeds to lists. Also allow: The author is implying that, whilst some might believe sports can instill such values, not everyone would necessarily agree/subscribe to such a proposition (especially given the ‘evidence’ of what is currently happening).

8. Why does the author refer to 'trust, reciprocity and shared values' as forms of 'social capital' (line 77)? Use your own words as far as possible. (2)

Lift	Inference
...they focus intently on building social capital – trust, reciprocity and shared values	<p>Social capital refers to the non-monetary 'assets/resources' of a company in terms of the 'profitable' interpersonal relationships which facilitate cooperation, forge bonds...</p> <p>(1m)</p> <p>the qualities of freedom from suspicion/faith in each other (trust), mutual help/give-and-take (reciprocity) and common beliefs/principles/standards (shared values) are all forms of social capital in that they are examples of such intangible qualities which enhance harmony and hence promote efficiency. (1m)</p> <p><i>NB. Students need not explain/paraphrase each virtue separately to gain the second mark.</i></p>

9. In the last paragraph, why does the author say that politicians today are failing to do a good job? Use your own words as far as possible. (2)

Lift	Paraphrase
... wedded to gladiatorial combat and	they are committed to/intent on waging belligerent/aggressive/pugnacious battle with their political rivals (i.e. they have a stubborn/obstinate/uncompromising adversarial mindset)
... the rankings mania of opinion polls,	they are obsessed with their own popularity/the public's perception/approval of them/their policies
... have signally lost the capacity to think beyond the narrow confines	their vision is myopic/blinkered (they no longer have the ability to consider the long term repercussions of their actions/policies)
of a very short race.	because they are focused exclusively on their immediate goal/objective, which is to win the next election/maintain power
	(1/2 mark for each point)

10. According to the author, what is stopping us from changing our 'competitive mindset' (line 88)? Use your own words as far as possible. (2)

Lift	Paraphrase
The problem is a failure ...of moral courage :	A lack of moral (accept) fortitude/ fibre / strength / rectitude / mettle
...the willingness to relinquish individual fantasies of winning...	to give up/abandon one's own selfish dreams of individual success
...in exchange for the bigger prize of	for the greater good/more laudable and desirable goal/achievement of
...joint achievement and shared progress.	common accomplishment/attainment and advancement/improvement
	(1/2 mark for each point)

11. Using material from paragraphs 4-6 only, summarise what the author has to say about the disadvantages of competition. Write your summary in no more than 120 words, not counting the opening words which are printed below. Use your own words as far as possible. (8)

Competition causes problems within organisations because...

	Passage	Paraphrase
	WITHIN ORGANISATIONS:	
1	competition for permanent jobs, bonuses and promotion <i>produces a culture of fear</i>	Creates/manufactures/generates a pervasive atmosphere of anxiety (allow worry/uneasiness)
2	<i>crude form of social Darwinism</i> , inspired by the hope that a need to survive will promote greater efficiency	A primitive system based on the principle of 'survival of the fittest', 'dog eat dog', 'law of the jungle' which is expected to produce better/superior results/productivity
3	In fact, it has just the opposite effect: people <i>sabotage each other</i> ,	But does just the reverse by causing everyone to subvert/undermine/obstruct/hinder/stymie everyone else
4	<i>appearing to be co-operative</i> while <i>keeping back just enough information</i> so that colleague-competitors <i>can't excel</i> .	Seeming/pretending to be collaborative/helpful/collegial while holding back sufficient material/facts/data to ensure rivals cannot shine/be outstanding
5	...erode trust	Corrode/wear away/wear down faith/confidence/belief in each other
6	... <i>can't deliver</i> the <i>creativity</i> managers need	Cannot produce the innovation/inventiveness/imagination/ingenuity bosses/companies require
7	Because it <i>specifically disables collaboration</i> .	As it prevents co-operation/teamwork
8	If I'm being judged in comparison with my peers, why would I help them?	Since it makes no sense/would be to aid/assist others in such an invidious/competitive/'dog-eat-dog' system
	WITHIN SCHOOLS:	
9	The fact that <i>current executives are the products of ruthlessly competitive education systems</i> only <i>exacerbates</i> the problem:	The reality that present/existing/modern/today's managers are the results of merciless/cutthroat schooling only worsens/aggravates/compounds the problem
10	... they bring with them <i>a lifetime of being trained to viciously compete</i> for class rankings, prizes and places.	As they see the system as natural/normal/acceptable OR: They perpetuate/condone such a (merciless/cut-throat...) system
11	In the US, where class rankings are still common, <i>parents advise their children not to lend a hand to others</i> ,	Parents tell/instruct their children to not help others/ to be selfish
12	on the grounds that doing so may <i>jeopardise their chance of securing the top spot</i> .	So they do not risk/endanger/threaten their prospects/opportunity of becoming the best/coming first
13	In the UK, ... now observe ' <i>competitive friending</i> ': parents' attempts to ensure that their children <i>select the right companions</i>	Children choose appropriate/suitable friends
14	to <i>enable future acceptance</i> in <i>the most prestigious social networks</i> .	To facilitate their eventual admittance into the most distinguished/highly-regarded/influential groups
15	...the emphasis on competition and ranking encapsulates the same message: <i>everyone</i> is a <i>potential threat</i>	Everybody is viewed a possible/likely rival/danger/enemy/opponent/adversary/antagonist
16	This <i>does little to teach the subtle habits of collaboration</i>	Which militates against the possibility of learning/instilling/inculcating the value of teamwork/co-operation
17	but much to <i>focus</i> every child's mind exclusively <i>on results</i> .	But concentrates/directs/fixes/centers every child's attention wholly/solely/completely/entirely/totally on attainment /the final outcome.
18	If grades are all that matter, does it matter how you get them?	Creating an 'ends justify the means' mentality/ a ruthless attitude.
19	...in higher education the past decade has brought <i>an explosion in plagiarism</i> and	At a tertiary level (accept 'higher education') there has been a huge increase/ upsurge in copying/stealing other people's work
20	the <i>use of proscribed drugs to enhance</i> exam performance.	And consumption of prohibited/banned/forbidden/illegal/illicit substances (accept drugs) to improve/augment/boost/increase academic results/achievements
	IN SCIENCE,	
21	...has produced a <i>culture</i> in which the <i>open exchange of ideas, data and theories has virtually evaporated</i> . (<i>keep tight-lipped</i> = R)	...the ethos/principle/philosophy of sharing/communicating discoveries/findings has practically/effectively/essentially vanished/disappeared
22	Science is a necessarily accretive process ...	Scientific progress is cumulative (it relies on people gradually building on each other's discoveries)
23	<i>fame-hungry</i> scientists wanting to be superstars	Scientists seeking celebrity status
24	<i>Intense rivalry</i> and	Powerful/strong/severe competition and
25	the <i>fear of being scooped</i> stop them from pitching in.	Dread of/anxiety about being 'pipped at the post' by rivals/ coming second/not coming first prevents/obviates/precludes co-operation/collaboration

18 + points	8	7 - 8 points	4
15 - 17 points	7	5 - 6 points	3
12 - 14 points	6	3- 4 points	2
9 -11 points	5	1 - 2 points	1

Sample Summary

Competition causes problems within organisations because,

instead of stimulating productivity and innovation, it creates an anxiety-ridden, 'dog eat dog' environment where subversion and suspicion belie ostensible collaboration, destroying teamwork as workmates withhold facts to block rivals and gain competitive advantage. Today's managers, molded by a similarly cut-throat schooling paradigm, compound the problem by condoning the system. Parents tell children not to help others to ensure first place and choose suitable friends to join influential cliques. Everybody is a possible rival and teamwork is neglected. Students fixate on achieving top marks by hook or by crook. Copying and the consumption of prohibited substances has proliferated at tertiary level. Scientific progress is cumulative, but celebrity-seeking scientists don't share because of severe competition and their dread of coming second. (120 words)

12. Margaret Heffernan argues that competition has extremely harmful effects on modern society. To what extent do you agree with her views? How applicable do you find her observations to yourself and your society? (10)

Margaret Heffernan takes the extreme position that the presence of competition in modern life is having a deleterious effect on both the individual and her society. Students can disagree with the author's arguments by identifying and criticizing the inherent flaws present in the passage. They can also disagree/agree with the author's arguments by examining the relevance of her arguments to their society. Good answers would:

- Demonstrate a nuanced appreciation of the writer's arguments.
- Evaluate the persuasiveness of the writer's claims by considering their credibility.
- Provide balance. If students adopt the perspective that competition has deleterious effects on their society, they should articulate why in certain circumstances, competition can be healthy for society and serves as a motivating force for an otherwise, lethargic populace. If students adopt the perspective that healthy competition plays a positive role in our lives, they need to consider why competition might not be desirable under certain circumstances.

The passage contains a number of flaws that students can critique.

- Heffernan is guilty of making over-generalizations/sweeping statements about the pernicious effects of competition. She assumes that all forms of competition are inherently unhealthy. However she fails to differentiate between healthy and unhealthy competition.
- She is exceptionally one-sided and does not give balance to her arguments. Her case against guilt is built on nothing more than an incomplete, myopic and biased understanding of competition. She never acknowledges any possible benefits of competition. By conveniently omitting the opposing viewpoint, Heffernan is viewed as less credible.
- She distorts the truth with sins of omission. Students can disagree with her arguments on the grounds that she totally neglects the very real possibility that the lack of competition also makes people complacent and lackadaisical, leading to mediocre performance.
- She adopts a Panglossian view of Collectivist cultures which emphasize family and work group goals above individual needs or desires and ignores the failings of Collectivist cultures (e.g the reluctance for open confrontation). She is an Idealist who naively assumes that all humans will be 'glad to share expertise'.
- She trivializes the importance of hierarchy and status contests in most modern societies, and clings onto to her overly optimistic hope that their influence will be diminished one day ("We need to celebrate the individuals and institutions that produce the greatest opportunities for the largest number of contributors as well as nurture a work environment in which people eagerly share expertise and where hierarchy and status contests are of negligible importance").
- She constructs a false dichotomy by treating competition and collaboration as mutually exclusive concepts, when in reality, they can co-exist. In order to push technologies and processes to the next level, a company may choose to reach out to other companies – even their competitors – and form collaborations so that it can handle a major innovation. Over the past few years, many companies have given up the anachronistic, first-to-market ideal to help propel their industry through the innovation cycle, and survive the competitive market. Collaboration is the key to staying competitive.

Competition as a Growth Strategy

Paragraph 2: Companies achieve growth through myopic, reckless and disproportionate strategies e.g mergers and acquisitions (M&A)...

This relentless quest for scale delivers huge risk. Unfortunately, competitive instincts don't stop until they fail.

We can perhaps take Heffernan's words as a warning that competition in the business arena can lead to business leaders pursuing M&A without sufficient planning or paying a disproportionate amount of money for the transaction. Hence, the pursuit of growth by a company is appropriately compared to the practice of some fishermen who use dynamite to catch fish as it can result in long-term destructive consequences for the company.

Agree

Mergers are a mechanism used by businesses to restructure in order to compete and prosper. Companies are taking a lot of risk in adopting M&A as a strategy to keep their competitive edge. Mergers can have a downside as conflicts arise when two firms merge e.g cultural clashes, discontent over new leadership, decreased employee motivation and reduced productivity etc.

Examples of merger failures: SIA sold its 49% stake in Virgin Atlantic to Delta Airlines in 2012. Delta paid US\$360 million, only a fraction of the 600 million pounds that SIA paid for the stake in 2000. One of the reasons for the merger failure was the difficulty of merging with Virgin's corporate culture (Richard Branson is known to be notoriously difficult to work with). Critics claimed that the details of the alliance were not carefully worked out before the deal was sealed.

Disagree

M&A, if successful, leads to a healthy expansion of business firms, increase in value and efficiency of firms, and the opportunity to move resources to optimal use. This results in long-term benefits. While Heffernan might argue that companies pursue growth with 'myopic, reckless and often disproportionate' strategies, these strategies are a means to establish a corporate global presence as they allow a company to penetrate new markets to grow its market share. The reluctance to take risks may sound the death knell for a company, and Heffernan fails to take this into consideration. She also fails to take into account the extensive groundwork done by the companies before a merger is proposed, deliberately ignoring their efforts in research and preparation. Preparing for a transaction requires a full analysis of the business, assets, liabilities, and human resources of the target.

Examples of successful mergers:

Keppel Bank and Tatlee Bank

Keppel TatLee Bank was a Singapore-based financial services organisation formed through a merger of Keppel Bank and Tat Lee Bank in 1998. Keppel Bank and Tat Lee Bank were small in comparison to the Big Four, and a merger would give the new entity to meet the new competitive realities in the banking sector. After the 1998 merger, Keppel TatLee Bank achieved a record 390% improvement in Net profits from \$53 million to \$260 million. Return on average shareholders' funds more than trebled. These results were achieved after the first year of successful merger of Keppel Bank and Tat Lee Bank.

LVMH: Luxury retail group's shopping spree in Singapore

Acquisitions by foreign powerhouses can help local companies expand their market share. LVMH acquired Crystal Jade Group and this helped to boost CJG's expansion plans. CJG plans to open 18 outlets this year as well as a 20,000 sq-ft restaurant in San Francisco. LVMH also acquired KuDeTa (expanding to Hong Kong), Charles and Keith (expanding to China), and Heng Long Tannery (enabling it to get advance contracts from crocodile farmers to improve its inventory). Another benefit of the acquisition: lower funding cost for the Singapore company due to improved credit rating (strong parent company).

Competition and the Exploitation of the Marginalised

Paragraph 3: In the retail industry, competing purely on price drives down labour costs, producing an increasingly exploited, disempowered and pauperized workforce.

Agree

Heffernan believes that corporations, in their neverending search for profits, pay workers as low a wage as possible. However, people who work in these factories may have no other way to provide for their families. These companies provide jobs for these people who might have no other choice. Since many poor countries compete for international investment by keeping the minimum wage low, the minimum wage is often below a subsistence income. It is not only the competition between companies that pauperizes the workforce to create tense competition at the workplace but also, the competition for foreign investment among countries.

E.g In China, Walmart has raised the exploitation of poverty stricken foreign workers to a fine and spectacularly remunerative art. Human rights organizations, labor unions, and other civic societies around the world criticize Walmart for worker exploitation, abuses, excessive

overtime, and inadequate wages.

E.g Singapore Labour chief Lim Swee Say rejected renewed calls from Members of Parliament for a minimum wage system in Singapore. MPs have shared concerns that wages at the bottom are not rising fast enough. It is feared that the minimum wage will become an additional cost of business paid by employers who will in turn either pass on the cost of the business to their customers, or become more cautious in hiring those who are less able or skilled.

Disagree

Yet, what Heffernan misses is that the same thirst to outdo competitors in the quest for profit will push companies to source for more workers expand their markets. To get these workers, a business will need to outbid its competitors. She has neglected a positive outcome of competition in business by focusing on only one of the strategies used by companies to increase market share—competing on price. She is overstating the harm in the use of price-cutting as a strategy in keeping a business as a going concern. Afterall, price-cutting may just be a temporary strategy to raise brand awareness or acquire market share. In addition, she exaggerates the negative effects of corporations operating factories in developing countries. Their presence can be mutually beneficial, and the workers' needs can be addressed by NGOs, unions, and governments. (Note: it can also be argued that the flow of migrants has far outpaced their progress in winning protections. Reports of exploitation by employers and agencies are rife; rights are limited). In developed countries, workers may be protected by strong unions that are able to pressurize the governments to investigate alleged mistreatment. E.g The National Labor Relations Board (of the USA government) found merit in charges that Walmart had unlawfully threatened employees in California and Texas with reprisal if they engaged in strikes and protests ahead of Black Friday, the big shopping day after Thanksgiving. If complaints are filed, the cases would go before an administrative law judge. Wal-Mart could be subject to penalties and required to inform its employees about their legally protected rights. Workers could be awarded back pay, reinstatement and reversal of any disciplinary action.

Competition in the Workplace

Paragraph 4: Competition produces a culture of fear. The system is a crude form of social Darwinism, inspired by the hope that a need to survive will promote greater efficiency.

Paragraph 4: Competition erodes trust and it cannot deliver innovation because it disables collaboration.

Paragraph 6: In the world of Science, a well-honed mindset has produced a culture in which the open exchange of ideas, data and theories has virtually evaporated.

Agree

In today's meritocratic workplace, ranking talent is nothing new. With the increase in emphasis on efficiency and productivity as global economies engage in keen competition, contemporary work practices reward output and performance. Meritocracy advocates fierce competition which pushes people to achieve the best that they can; regardless of class, race or creed they may find success if they get to the finishing line first. In Singapore, the Performance Based Evaluation System and the Performance Bonus Scheme are institutionalized to encourage employees to realize their potential. However, in the absence of clear indicators of what 'good' performance is, it only serves to create tense competition at the workplace. As a rise in base income is modest, many employees have come to depend on the performance bonus as part of their regular income. To strive towards the coveted 'A' grade, colleagues are entangled in a fierce annual competition with one another as each strives to out-perform the rest. While it cannot be denied that a meritocratic system has been indispensable in the rapid rise of Singapore as a prosperous city-state, Singapore must also tackle the inequalities that the system currently fails to address. It must understand that the concept of "merit" will also evolve with the times. It is about striking the right balance, and using a transparent yardstick to evaluate the performance of the workers or the companies.

Disagree

Heffernan fails to recognize that competition drives the search for competitive advantage, produces fresh ideas and actions. It is through such innovation that the great breakthroughs in applied engineering, technology and public policy have been made. The Singapore government drives an innovation agenda in order for Singapore companies to turn ideas into repeatable, consistent products or services, and bring the innovation into new markets. This is deemed necessary for the survival in a competitive world.

E.g Singapore was identified by the Boston Consultancy Group as the country with the most encouraging government policies to innovation in 2009. Examples of Singapore's innovations include X-Minicapsule speakers (created by Singapore company XMI Pte Ltd), MTech FeverScan S3000 (created by MTech Imaging) and Trek Technology Thumb Drive (created by Singapore based Trek Technology).

Innovation driven by competitive juices lead to sustainable innovative solutions.

E.g Hyflux is a Singapore company that aims to develop the most cost-effective and versatile membrane systems that can be used in a wide variety of environmental and water applications. To keep ahead of its competitors (e.g United Envirotech Ltd, Advanced Emissions Solutions Ltd.), Hyflux keeps its knowledge base up-to-date by tapping into ongoing membrane developments through linkages and collaborations with internationally-recognised research experts, reputable universities and renowned research institutions worldwide.

Competition and Education

Paragraph 5: A ruthlessly competitive school system produces executives who are trained to viciously compete. In schools, they were discouraged from helping others in order to retain the top spot for themselves or encouraged to form alliances with the 'right' friends.

Agree

Heffernan claims that the spirit of competition in the workplace has its roots in the education system. This is largely true of the Asian education landscape. Asian schools produce world-leading test scores and schools do all they can to outperform other schools on test scores. National exams (e.g the A Levels) are a long-established method to identify leaders for the community. The pressure to outperform competitors exists at every level of the education system and produces feelings of jealousy, distrust and animosity among students. In 2013, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee announced his intention to revamp Singapore's education system to become a more open, holistic and less over-competitive one. He acknowledged concerns from Singaporeans that the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) has become excessively competitive and a cause of huge stress to young students and their parents.

Disagree

Competition ignites motivation to boost performance and productivity in schools. The end goal for places in prestigious universities or scholarships can also give the individual a sense of self-validation and a ticket to a more comfortable life. There are also sweeping changes in Singapore's education landscape. The ministry has made a conscious effort to shift the emphasis away from just grades. In pursuit of its vision of 'Every School is a Good School', the ministry has abolished secondary school banding -- a system that ranks schools based on academic results at the 'O' Levels. MOE also started the Leadership Development Programme (LDP) which focuses on developing the capacity of participants for servant-leadership through a mentorship attachment with an adult leader from a community organisation. It seeks to develop the capacity of participants for servant-leadership in a diverse society.

Competition and Science

Paragraph 7: Kudos for a scientist is measured in publications, citations and research awards – and as the competition for both has intensified, so have fraud, plagiarism and what scientists euphemistically call 'normal misbehaviour': sabotage, data spinning, culling and even fabrication. There is also a growing concern that the increasing numbers of scientific papers that have to be retracted because they are rushed into print too fast, with inaccurate, incomplete or specious data.

Agree

In the competition to gain recognition for their work, research misconduct occurs. This results in damage to researchers' careers, institutional costs of investigating suspected fraud, the misdirection of public policy, and the misleading of other scientists who pursue false leads. Money, status and impatience are some of the reasons why some scientists commit scientific misconduct flagrantly.

E.g 2002 Simon Shorvon, chief of National Neuroscience Institute, was found guilty of putting Parkinson's disease patients through tests without their informed consent.

E.g Dr Melendez, a former NUS professor had published 2 papers in journals Nature Immunology, and Science. The piece in Nature Immunology was retracted following some irregularities identified in the Science paper. Questions were also raised about the validity of findings in the Science paper, which was soon retracted as well. The papers claimed to have made breakthroughs that would lead to better treatments of generalized blood infections.

E.g In China, research grants and promotions are awarded on the basis of the number of articles published, not on the quality of the original research. This has fostered an industry of plagiarism, invented research and fake journals that Wuhan University estimated in 2009 was worth \$150m. In 2010, *Nature (a science journal)* had also noted rising concerns about fraud in Chinese research, reporting that in one Chinese government survey, a third of more than 6,000 scientific researchers at six leading institutions admitted to plagiarism, falsification or fabrication.

Disagree

Heffernan appears to be poorly informed regarding the prevalence of scientific fraud, stating that scientific misconduct has intensified. In reality, scientific fraud is relatively uncommon and happens in less than 10 percent of the scientific papers published. Heffernan's scaremongering tactics are intended to mislead her audience into believing that scientific fraud is rampant in the scientific community.

Competition and Sport

Paragraph 8: While it is acknowledged that sport can teach the values of fair play, collaboration, integrity and discipline, most people believed that all that mattered was winning.

Agree

In competitions, all that matters is winning. People only remember the results and it's very important that a sportsman comes off being a winner. Coaches in Singapore have been accused of pushing their young charges too hard. These coaches claim that the schools /clubs push the coaches and the coaches have to push their young athletes, or risk the termination of their employment contracts. Hence, the win-at-all-cost mentality. Singapore's table-tennis squad has also been heavily criticised for its foreign talent policy. Some Singaporeans claim that the nation was tarnishing the spirit of the Games with its glut of naturalised paddlers. A SEA Games champion claimed that the 'buying' of athletes was similar to doping. It is perceived that both serve the same purpose: to win at all costs, except that the former is

legal.

Disagree

In the past, the Singapore Sports Council developed strategies targeted at winning medals. It has been rebranded this year as 'Sport Singapore' and it aims to develop a more inclusive identity that empowers people to live through sport. It has also come up with initiatives like 'ActiveSG' to encourage all Singaporeans to sign up for sports programmes and utilise facilities at the various ActiveSG Sports Centres islandwide. The long-term blueprint for sports in Singapore aims to create a sporting ecosystem that provides innovative and experiential sports-related programmes. Thus, the emphasis has shifted from its original strong emphasis on competitive sport to the new emphasis of developing healthy and resilient people with positive attitudes. E.g A student from Dunman High School was lauded by Minister for Education Heng Swee Keat for exemplifying the value of honesty when he informed the umpire that the shuttlecock had touched him before it went out of play. This resulted in him losing the match but earned him the Sportsmanship Award instead.

Paragraph 10: Many politicians, wedded to gladiatorial combat and the rankings mania of opinion polls, have signally lost the capacity to think beyond the narrow confines of a very short race.

Agree

Critics of the Singapore government accuse the ruling party of pandering to popular sentiment after the 2011 elections. They point to 'Populist' policies which cater to almost the entire population offer all sorts of grants. An increasing and inexhaustive list of grants i.e. additional CPF Housing Grant, Special CPF Housing Grant, CPF Housing Grant for Family, CPF Housing Grant for Singles/ CPF Housing Grant for Singles (living with parents) and CPF Top-Up Grant. In response to Singaporeans' concerns over the Foreign Talent issue after the 2011 elections, the Singapore government also announced its intention to slow the inflow of foreign talent by imposing a tighter criterion on PRs and citizenship and tightening the issuing of work permits and employment passes to foreigners. These moves are often to the detriment of businesses already reeling from the worldwide economic downturn and the greed of local landlords. Business leaders fear the cascading effects on the economy of businesses forced to scale down or close altogether, because they cannot find sufficient workers. Deemed as a myopic and short-term move to appease the populace, some business leaders worry that this shift in immigrant policies may be damaging to the Singapore economy in the long run.

Disagree

Singaporeans, who seem still to trust the PAP to do an efficient job, want not an alternative government but a stronger opposition. They appear to welcome the Workers Party which triumphed in the opposition's first-ever GRC victory, in the Aljunied constituency in the 2011 elections. They believe that an alternative government can see a problem and its solution from a different perspective. The increasingly vocal Singapore electorate appears to signal that they would never again be apathetic, timid and silent about issues that affect their lives. Hence the 'gladiatorial combat' may be perceived as a welcome change to the Singaporeans and it does not signal a 'loss in the capacity to think beyond the narrow confines of a very short race'.

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