



Established in 1936
The Doon School
WEEKLY



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REGULARS 2	SOCIAL SERVICE 3	HOCKEY WORLD CUP 3	STORY 4
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Too 'Trying'?

Test week has now become the equivalent of a mid-term examination. When I first heard of the new system, I was fascinated. Maybe it was just something new that I was willing to try out. I did feel, initially, that giving us more time to study, suspending all school activities and taking these tests more seriously would be beneficial, academically. After having appeared for my first 'mini-Trials' this year, I developed certain reservations: I felt I was in too deep over my head. The pressure was just too much for a test week.

We have to be discerning about the objectives of such internal, during-term testing. There are three broad objectives: to keep us in touch with our syllabi, train us for the exams and have us learn something. The testing method must correspond with the objective. As far as I can see, we have more time to study a smaller volume of our syllabus, hence covering a narrow section in great depth: we deal with two-hour unit test papers. This indeed prepares us for an examination as exam orientation requires us to practise presentation, time management, writing answers and any number of other 'skills', rather than only acquiring knowledge. It does not suit the purpose of periodic revision as we focus on a confined segment of the syllabus disproportionately. Furthermore, it renders our curriculum examination-oriented. This one-time testing even caters to our tendency to procrastinate. As we are given ample time and opportunities, we can study at the last moment, rather than be consistent with our course of study.

Somewhere, we should reconsider the objective of having report-card tests. I was always of the opinion that a report-card test was to keep boys in contact with the course that has been transacted and to make them revise the covered sections of the syllabus periodically rather than sporadic, examination-intensive study. Therefore, it is best we disperse our assessment rather than focus it. The Trials-like environment is too serious and harrowing to be considered a test week or a report-card. Also, with the earlier system of periodic, small-scale assessment, there were enough opportunities for us to make up for one bad report card. With the new system, there is no much-sought-after second chance (especially for IB students, whose predicted grades are on the line). There is also no question of missing a test week, the legitimacy of the reasons notwithstanding.

Also, focussing entirely on examinations is, in my opinion, not the right way to go. Assessment should

Vivek Santayana on the 'mini-Trials' system of test week and how it only increases academic pressure

be more inclusive of our actual learning rather than performance in occasional tests. We should perhaps develop a system of pop quizzes, class tests, interactive assignments or other such testing methods. Teachers should have the freedom to grade us on the basis of our overall performance. Objectivity need not be an issue as these are mere internal report card tests. They don't need to be as serious as an end-of-term examination. They need not be as objective or concrete as a final transcript, but should only be an estimate of the student's capability.

This system is on one extreme, and, unfortunately, it is the extreme of pressure and tediousness. A more flexible system would greatly ease the stress that students are facing. We have forgotten what the report-cards were originally meant to be: a recurring exercise to set benchmarks for our progress. They also measured, to a great extent, our learning rather than just serving as preparation for an examination. While the 'in-depth studying' may be welcomed, there is no denying that we are heading in the wrong direction.

Opinions

The Doon School Weekly gathered opinions on the current test week system from members of the School community

"This is a good system. It's no longer a report card test, but a 'mini-trial'. Boys get more time to study. It's also too soon to judge the effect of the system. It should go on for one year at least before we make any judgement." – **MCJ**

"It is the first time Sc form is going through this system. It's exhausting, to say the very least. But I feel it's better because of the depth in which we study our syllabus, despite the lesser volume." – **Shoumitra Srivastava**

"The approach is very half-hearted. To begin with, it's not as well-organised as Trials. Starting from the most basic logistics to our attitude – the books strewn all around the Main Building corridor, especially. They've gone by too fast and we weren't able to study very well." – **Ujjwal Dahuja**

"In my opinion, this system is better because you study once in a term and you do so thoroughly rather than have many shallow revisions scattered throughout the term. This will be of great help for Trials as it is very comprehensive." – **Manas Poddar**

Regulars

TALK RECAP

Roshni Wadhwa, an educational psychologist, gave a talk on *How to Handle Stress and Improve Learning Skills* on February 13.

Sanjay Karir gave a talk on *Influence of Home and School on Personality Development* on February 27.

Rashit Tandon gave a talk on *Safe Internet Surfing* on March 13.

IAYP

Ashustosh Singh and Rishi Sood were awarded the **IAYP Blazer** for completing all three levels of the IAYP.

Congratulations!

CRICKET

The School Cricket Team played a match against **Welham Boys' School** on Saturday, March 20, and won by 32 runs.

The School Cricket Team played a match against **Meerut Public School** on Sunday, March 21, and won by two wickets. Siddhant Sachdev was adjudged **Man of the Match**.

The School Under-15 Cricket Team played a match against **Meerut Public School**. The team lost by 120 runs. Raj Kumar Vijay was adjudged **Man of the Match**.

Well done!

CAREER CALL

The Careers' Notice Board will feature **'Computing and Computer Technology'** this week. All those interested should look it up.

Opinion oll

Do you think the summer uniform should be implemented earlier this year?



(334 members of the community were polled)

Next week's question: Do you find the current test-week system unnecessarily demanding?

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Utkarsh Jha



Melting Moments

Unquotable Quotes

BKC got postponed.

Abhilaksh Lalwani schedules.

We are the under-horses.

ANC, coach extraordinaire.

What a slab of cube!

Saarthak Singh, awestruck.

Put the gol circle.

STB designs.

Stop bitching on me.

Arifeen Chowdhury gets touchy.

I have to go to the work room to do some Weekly.

Arifeen Chowdhury, dilligent.

Are you medically infit?

NTC doesn't buy it.

The School Cricket Team played a Welham Boys' match against Welham Boys' School.

PKN, announcer extraordinaire.

I amn't saying that.

Utkarsh Jha defends himself.

Oh my damn!

Madhav Dutt, outraged.

I wake Shubham you up.

Madhav Dutt, early bird.

Oye! Lower down!

Umang Newatia demands silence.

Cadenza and Coda

Sriyash Kishorepuria

Long has it been since

The first and second and third movement.

The exposition exposed,

The development complete,

The grand recapitulation recovered,

And soloist displayed.

Peace in calmer moods searched,

The finale return to the grand beginning,

And the obstinacy of the rondo resolved.

The trill on the dominant played,

The virtuosity of the soloist predominant

Over the many.

The theme and its intrinsic variations conveyed.

All has come to pass.

The violins have taken flight,

The bass has stood its ground;

The cellos have sung,

The flutes and oboes descended.

The clarinet has wept its tears,

The trumpet has shrieked and cried.

Only the poor bassoon stands misunderstood,

Confused for a clown.

All has come to pass.

The conductor is emptied, the soloist played out.

Moods have changed.

The final blow of the tonic,

Then Silence,

Music, Sound, then Noise.

All fleeting:

Soon to be forgotten

Or even worse,

Lost.

| Reports |

Fatehpur Inspected

Angad Bawa and Smitha Nair report on their visit to Fatehpur on February 17

In the middle of February, the two of us, escorted by AMB, went for a day trip to Fatehpur, which was to be visited by Agatha Sangma, Minister of State for Rural Development in the Union Cabinet. She was paying a visit to Fatehpur to inspect the School's contribution to the village.

We reached Fatehpur punctually by 3:00 pm, although we waited for an hour-and-a-half before we could meet the Minister. Meanwhile, we were shown around by a village elder. We broke the ice with the village children by playing with them and talking. We were so engrossed in our games that we missed the approaching cars and enthusiastic crowd that had gathered: Agatha Sangma had arrived. Her reception was well-organised. We took charge of the situation and showed her around. She was extremely impressed by the work done and the effort put in by the boys of the School.

Later, she addressed a large gathering of local people and the media about how the developmental issues ahead could be addressed. There were suggestions made to raise the literacy level. This was followed by a question-answer session. Owing to engagements in other villages, she had to leave soon after that. Although it was short-lived, it truly was an enriching experience.

Gyanoday Annual Day

Devashish Singal reports on his visit to Meerut for the Gyanoday Annual Day function on February 25

After picking up enthusiastic children from Balbir Road and Sopera Basti, we (AMB, VKL, PVD, Angad Bawa, Aviral Gupta, Arnav Matta, Smitha Nair and I) began our long journey to Meerut. Everyone, excluding the children of the *basti*, fell asleep as soon as the bus left. It was a first-time experience for those children and they wanted to savour every moment of it. We reached Meerut at 11 am, exhausted after a six-hour journey. After greeting the director, Avinash Alag, an Old Boy, we proceeded for breakfast.

The Gyanoday Annual Day function began soon after the arrival of the Chief Guest, Dr Peter McLaughlin, with energetic dance performances by the young children of Gyanoday. They were followed by track athletics, which included conventional races and also more entertaining events, such as the three-legged race, sack race, spoon and lemon race, etc. There was also an invitational race for teachers and students in which AMB and Aviral emerged victorious. Next was a gymnastics display, in which we witnessed spectacular acrobatics and seamless vaulting over the 'horse'. The most gripping performance of the function was by the children, passing through rings of fire, which they did almost professionally. I was overwhelmed, more so to see the rapt expression on the faces of the watching children. The three-hour-long programme ended with a tabla recital by one of the boys from the Vatika and speeches by the Chief Guest and Avinash Alag. We then had lunch and after interacting with a few guests and Old Boys, we started our journey back to Dehradun.

It is very rare in today's world to see a true philanthropist, a person forgoing material wealth and devoting his time and energy towards the education and welfare of the underprivileged. I personally feel proud to have had the opportunity to get acquainted with Avinash Alag, who successfully runs 23 Vatikas for the cause.

A World-Class Experience

Karan Bir Singh Dhariwal and Shivam Katyal recount their trip to Delhi to witness the Hockey World Cup between March 12 and 14

It was the first time that boys in School got the opportunity to witness the most prestigious event of our national sport, hockey. Escorted by ASH, six boys reached the Major Dhyanchand National Stadium to witness the game at its highest standard over the next two days.

The first match we saw was between New Zealand and South Africa, for the 9th and 10th positions. South Africa dominated the first half with a goal in the fourth minute. The second half saw the 'kiwis' fight back with Andrew Hayward scoring in the 42nd minute. Both teams fought hard for the goals as the score reached 4-4 at full time. Needless to say, the audience was on tenterhooks. A penalty shootout swung the match in New Zealand's favour, and the climactic end was most fitting to a match of such intensity.

The next game was between India and Argentina for the 7th and 8th positions. In the first half, Argentina managed to maintain a goal's lead despite India's dominating and skillful game. The second half was a disaster for India as three goals were scored against them in under 4 minutes. Though Shivendra Singh managed to score one goal, it wasn't good enough to turn the tables. While we had maintained possession throughout the game, our inability to score goals led to our finishing a modest 8th.

After India's loss, we were disheartened, but the next match lifted our spirits. Korea's short passes were not enough to penetrate the firm Spanish defense. The Spaniards scored two goals in succession and secured the fifth position.

The next day saw two scintillating games of hockey. The first match was between the Dutch and the English for the bronze medal. Ashley Jackson of England scored twice to give his team a lead at half-time. Holland fought back in the second half, scoring three goals and stealing the game from the English.

The finals were between Germany and Australia. The crowd was supporting Germany as they had a chance to emerge victorious for the third consecutive time. Australia scored the first goal which created immense pressure on the Germans. Tensions rose and the atmosphere was electric as the crowd's favourite was falling behind. Germany levelled the score nearing half time. The excitement grew correspondingly. Australia forged through the German defense once again and managed to score a goal, and they maintained this narrow lead to emerge victorious after a gap of 24 years.

While we did have the time of our lives and we enjoyed some of the most spectacular performances in the sport that we have ever seen live at the stadium, we also learned many aspects of the game that we were hitherto unaware of. It was inspiring to see world-class players play a world-class game, and we came away with a reinforced love for the sport.

| Fiction |

Passing Through

Vivek Santayana

It was June 19, around three in the afternoon, the heat oppressive, the house locked, the maid predictably unwell, the day like any other hot Calcutta day in June and Mr Roy returned to find his son, my friend, Abhideep, dead. He was lying on his bedroom floor with no evidence of an accident and even less of murder. He had been perfectly healthy. The conclusion arrived at by elimination was that it was suicide, despite nothing, neither the means nor a motive, indicating so. Nothing that was uncovered in Abhideep's room was of any help in determining the reason for his death, not even the corpse in its comfortable position. The iPod was playing his favourite playlist. His books were in perfect order on his bookshelf: arranged by author, alphabetically by surname, then by title. His textbooks were on his desk, stacked neatly by size, their spines facing outwards. There were no missed calls or unread text messages on his phone, nor were there any unwritten emails that reflected the vaguest distress in his life. Nothing was out of the ordinary. But one needs no evidence of abnormalities; they are taken for granted when one commits suicide. Consensus compensated for the dearth of reasoning, and the truth was thus decided. Mr Roy was distraught. His son had been happy, ostensibly. He had had everything a boy of seventeen could need, not a mother, true, but she had passed away too long ago for the boy to remember and feel her lack. Abhideep's younger brother shared the death on *Facebook*: "Rest in peace, Abhideep *dada*" he wrote, "despite the stormy unrest that you have left behind." Consequently, condolences poured in. Mr Roy had to combat his pain with the infuriating allegations of murder thrown at him by the police.

An obituary was published in the following day's edition of the newspaper. Even the most heartfelt expressions of sympathy did not approximate the cause of Abhideep's death, but rather mourned the loss of a "fine, talented young boy whose death has left a wound that will never heal, an emptiness that nothing can fill". Such employment of lacklustre imagery culminated in an ephemeral creative fervour in his school. Within a week, students churned out verses and stanzas about Abhideep's eloquence in speech and writing being insufficient to express his anguish. Everyone wished him salvation and happiness in heaven despite knowing the "departed soul" had been a self-proclaimed atheist. It became fashionable to be part of this cult. Everybody joined it with an indifference towards their past dealings with the living Abhideep that was almost comic. His ex-girlfriend forgave him for his 'intellectual inclinations' and paid him her last respects, apologizing for whatever little she blamed herself for. His friends forgave him for not sharing his

plight. Everyone else had forgone their animosity and forgotten their scuffles in the dining hall and arguments in the corridors. They sympathetically forgave him for his character. I was merely looked through, as though my refusal to involve myself was tantamount to showing callous disregard of a friend's death. But I'd like to think that when everyone else looked at me, they saw Abhideep staring back at them, as coldly as he would if he were alive, or, better yet, as maliciously as he would, if he were to haunt them.

What depressed me most was the score of idiotic motives assigned to the suicide. The more irrational ones held that, deep within, he was displeased and dissatisfied with his life. He could no longer bear to continue living. They were the most aggrieved, for they lacked the knowledge (rather, an excuse) to exempt themselves from the accountability of the death. Those that were more perceptive, although quixotic, attributed it to his reading, or maybe even the films he would watch. Already, his affinity for Camus had been unsettling for everyone. They satisfied themselves with the few marked passages in Abhideep's copy of *The Fall* or the premise of the last film they watched together, *World's Greatest Dad*. Those more honest were content with mere surprise, and ventured no further to ascribe the suicide to reasons they did not understand. They merely forgave him for the trouble he had caused his family.

The months that followed passed quickly. Things gradually returned to normal, the only difference being Mr Roy's promotion to Vice President and the cyclic, annual rituals of mourning on June 19 and October 11.

ERRATA

In the update of Inter-House Debating in issue no. 2242 (dated March 6), the second debate mentioned was Oberoi vs Kashmir, whereas it was actually **Oberoi vs Jaipur**.

In the review of the Junior Dramatics Production in the previous issue (issue no. 2244, dated March 20), (titled *Of Virtues and Vices and Many Variants in Between*), **Rahul Srivastava's** name was erroneously mentioned by the author as Rahul Sharma.

In the **Inter-House Cricket** update, the scorecard for Kashmir vs Tata had incorrectly featured Jaipur House, whereas it was **Kashmir House** that was 64 all out.

The *Weekly* regrets the errors.

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