**College English Creative Reading 3  
跨文化交际英语·阅读教程3**

**Unit 12 Assessing Performance**



**Note on the Topic**

**Learning Objectives**

**1.Think about the pros and cons of using examinations as assessments and make your own argument over this issue;**

**2.Learn to use citations in academic writing;**

**3.Make a “word alphabet” and expand your knowledge about examinations across cultures.**

**Before You Read**

**1.Watch the following video and discuss the following questions with a partner.**



**2.Discuss the following questions with a partner.**

2.1 What would the mother do when her child implied that her conception about studying was out of date?

She would ignore him, grip his hand more sternly and drag him to the car. 2.2 What should test means be?

Different test means should be designed for students with different abilities.

2.3 What is the relationship between exam and society?

Exams are society’s methods of telling you what you’re worth.

2.4 Why can’t we let society tell us what we are worth?

Because the society is hypocritical. It tells us “abortion is wrong” but then looks down on teenage parents; sells products to promote natural hair, looks and smooth complexion with the model on the box half photo-shopped and having fake lashes and hair extensions.

2.5 What is the problem with English teachers?

They care more about the literal techniques, formality of students’ writing. Besides, they expected students to express contempt in writing.

**Reading A**

***Examinations — Frightening or Fair?***

Most educational systems make use of examinations and they have become a well-established means of measuring a person’s understanding of a subject. Examinations, it has been argued, may help to identify the most able learners, and the existence of an examination at the end of a course may motivate learners to work hard. However, in recent years, the need for examinations has been brought into question as a result of the pressure they *exert* on students. In this essay, I examine arguments that support examinations and those that do not. I then go on to consider whether or not examinations should be *retained* as the main mode of assessing learning

**Background Information:**

**Examinations**

The text presents arguments for and against formal examinations. Internationally, many countries now use a combination of assessed coursework and mid-year or final tests (in the form of exams). The coursework may consist of a series of brief tasks, essays, or small projects but such assessment is arguably different from (and complementary to) formal exams. In some places, the idea of continuous assessment has replaced formal exams entirely. Occasionally, a portfolio system is used, for courses such as creative writing. Even with exams, as the Intercultural Notes section shows, there are many variations in the formats of exams.

**Key words:**

**exert:**to use influence, authority, or power in order to affect or achieve something

**retain:**to keep someone or something

**参考译文：**

**考试——可怕还是公正？**

大多数教育体系采用考试作为衡量一个人对一门学科的掌握程度的既定手段。人们承认考试有助于识别最有能力的学习者，在每门课程学习结束时安排考试激发学习者更加努力学习。然而由于考试给学生带来压力，近年来，对考试的需要已经受到质疑。在这篇文章中，我将分别探讨支持考试和反对考试的观点。然后我会继续就考试是否应作为评估学习效果的主要方式进行论述。

**Reading B**

A number of education experts have presented evidence to show that the existence of examinations encourages students to take their work seriously. They do this by giving students a concrete goal to aim for and most students appreciate examinations for the way they provide an organizing focus for their studies (see, for example, Feng, 2000: 20). Without examinations schools would almost certainly have far greater numbers of poorly motivated students than is the case at present. In the examination itself students are stimulated by the competitive atmosphere to produce the best work they are capable of, and time pressures simply reflect that in the real world all tasks are tackled under time *constraints* — often very tight ones. Examinations stimulate hard work and healthy competition, which reflect the realities of the outside world.

**Key Words:**

**constraint:** something that limits your freedom to do what you want

**参考译文：**

一些教育专家给出证据表明考试的存在督促学生认真对待他们的学业。它使学生向着一个明确的目标去努力，大部分学生赞同考试是因为它提供了一个集中有效的学习方法(见例Feng, 2000:20)。没有考试的话，学校里不上进的学生的人数肯定会比现在多得多。在考试过程中，学生为竞争的气氛所激发，发挥出自己最好的水平，而时间带来的压力正好反映了现实生活中所有工作的处理都有时间限制——通常很紧迫。考试激励认真的学习和健康的竞争，这些反映了外部世界的现实。

**Reading C**

However, examinations can affect the psychological state of candidates. Green (2001: 92) has argued that although a little stress is necessary to ensure a good performance, examinations can cause some students severe psychological problems. In fact, students who are relaxed tend to do better than those who are anxious. Carroll (see Green, ibid.) demonstrated this in experiments carried out under examination conditions. Candidates who felt calm and *at ease* were found to organize their work more logically and express themselves more clearly than nervous candidates.

**Key Words:**

**at ease:** confident and relaxed

**参考译文：**

然而，考试会影响考生的心理状态。格林(2001：92)认为，尽管一点压力对取得好成绩是必不可少的，但考试能引起学生严重的心理问题。事实上，学生在放松的状态下比他们在焦急的状态下要做得更好。卡罗尔(见格林，出处同上)在考试过程中做了一个试验。他发现平静、放松的考生比紧张的考生答卷有条理得多，表达观点也清楚得多。

**Reading D**

The next consideration is the measuring function of examinations. Society needs a standardized system of assessment for deciding who will continue on to *tertiary* education, and who will do particular jobs. Many very important selection procedures rely on examination results. For example, without the *objectives* measurements offered by examination results employers would find it very difficult to know whom to employ and at which level of responsibility to employ people. University administrators would also have no way of knowing who was suitable to undertake degree-level studies. Examinations also help educational institutions to measure the effectiveness of their own teaching methods. A set of poor examination results will force a school or university to review its *syllabuses*, teaching methods, and instructional materials.

**Key Words:**

**tertiary:** relating to colleges and universities

**objective:** something that you plan to achieve

**syllabus:** a list of the main subjects in a course of study

**参考译文：**

下面要考虑的是考试的衡量功能。社会需要一个形成标准的评估系统来决定谁将继续接受高等教育，谁将做特殊的工作。很多十分重要的筛选程序都有赖于考试的结果。比如，没有考试结果所提供的客观评估，雇主就很难决定要雇用谁以及雇用的人应该负有什么责任。大学管理人员也无从得知谁适合接受学位深造。考试还帮助教育机构检验他们教学方法的有效性。一组糟糕的考试结果促使学校或大学修正课程提纲、教学方法和教材。

**Reading E**

The validity of examination results has, however, been challenged by Fan (2001: 18) who argues that examinations encourage students to memorize information rather than understand it thoroughly. Examinations may not provide a valid standardized way to compare students’ ability if they only measure what a candidate has memorized rather than understood. If high grades are achieved at the expense of deep learning they are meaningless and cannot be treated as valid by educational institutions, employers or, indeed, the candidates themselves.

**参考译文：**

然而考试结果的有效性受到了樊恩(2001：18)的挑战，他认为考试只是让学生记住知识，而不是对它充分理解。如果考试只是衡量学生的记忆程度而不是理解程度，它就不能提供一个有效的标准来比较学生的能力。如果高分的取得是以死记硬背为代价，那么考试的结果就没有多大意义，不能被教育机构、雇主甚至考生自己视为有效的依据。

**Reading F**

A third argument in favour of examinations is that the alternative mode of assessment, continuous assessment by coursework, has serious *deficiencies*. In continuous assessment students, particularly the weaker ones, get a great deal of help from teachers. This attention pulls them up to a higher *overall* grade than they may have achieved in an examination. Further, an unfortunate fact associated with continuous assessment is that it has a “levelling” effect — that is, teachers avoid awarding grades at the top and bottom of the scale — with the result that students’ marks *cluster* around the mean grade. Employment and future study decisions are then made very difficult because students appear to be mostly of the same ability. Examinations, however, have 65 the effect of spreading students more realistically over the full range of possible grades and the results obtained in this way provide employers and universities with much more reliable data on which to base their decisions.

**Key Words:**

**deficiency:** a fault that makes someone or something not good enough

**overall:** including everything

**cluster:** to form a small close group

**参考译文：**

赞同考试的第三个观点是由于另一种方式的评估，即对平时作业的持续性评估有严重的不足之处。持续性评估使学生，尤其是成绩较差的学生得到老师的很大帮助。这种关注带动学生，使他们获得比考试中更高的分数。此外，一个和持续性评估有关的不幸事实是它具有“持平”的效果——就是说，教师不判定一个范围内的最低分或最高分——学生的分数聚集在平均的等级。于是去工作还是继续学习就很难决定，因为学生显得大部分都能力相当。然而考试能够把学生更加真实地分布在一个可能的分数范围内，这样所得到的结果使雇主和大学能根据更可靠的资料来做决定。

**Reading G**

The concerns about continuous assessment have been *refuted* by Brown (2002: 62), who suggests that assessment by 100% coursework ensures that teachers will cover the full range of topics on the subject syllabuses. Teachers are always very anxious about examination results and feel that their competence is judged, to a large extent, on the results achieved by their students. The consequence of this is that instead of teaching a complete syllabus, teachers often concentrate only on those parts which are directly relevant to examinations. Continuous assessment ensures that all topic areas on the syllabus are given equal attention.

**Key Words:**

**refute:** to say that a statement is not true or accurate without giving proof

**参考译文：**

这种对于持续性评估的担忧受到布朗(2002：62)的驳斥，他认为对课业百分之百的评估保证了教师兼顾到课程提纲的所有课题。教师总是对考试结果很在意，觉得他们能力的评定在很大程度上依赖于学生的考试成绩。结果，教师常常只注重和考试直接有关的部分，而不是教授全部的课程提纲。持续性评估保证了提纲上的所有课题范围都得到同等的关注。

**Reading H**

In this essay, I have discussed some of the main arguments for and against the use of examinations as the main mode of assessing learning. Benefits of examinations were explained, for example, their provision of a standardized form of assessing candidates’ suitability for employment or further studies, and their *potential* to stimulate students to work hard by creating a competitive atmosphere in which they strive to produce the best work they are capable of. I also analyzed some of the main arguments against examinations. *Drawbacks* include the harmful psychological effects they have on some students, and the claim that examinations encourage memorization rather than understanding of information. I also pointed out that concern about examinations may cause some teachers to limit the topic areas covered in a course.

**Key Words:**

**potential:** the possibility of developing or achieving something in the future

**drawback:** a feature of something that makes it less useful than it could be

**参考译文：**

在这篇文章里，我已经讨论了一些赞成或反对将考试作为评价学习的主要模式的基本观点。考试的益处已经阐释过了，比如，提供了标准的形式来评价考生是适合去工作还是继续学习，还有创造一种竞争气氛让学生发挥最好的水平，从而促使学生努力学习。我也分析了一些反对考试的主要观点。考试的缺陷包括它对学生的心理产生有害影响，还有观点认为考试只是促使学生死记硬背而不是理解知识。我还指出了考试也许导致某些教师局限于课程讲解范围而带来的担忧。

**Reading I**

*Evaluating* the evidence leads me to conclude that examinations should be retained. They are a reasonably reliable indicator of students’ academic ability and allow employers and educational administrators to base their judgements on objective rather than *subjective* or *impressionistic* data. I am not, however, in favour of examinations being the only form of assessment. I would recommend that most courses of study should *allot* 40% of marks to continuous assessment but the remaining 60% should be reserved for the examination. In this way, a fair balance will be achieved between grades scored throughout a period of study and those earned under examination conditions.

**Key Words:**

**evaluate:** to think carefully about something before making a judgement

**subjective:** based on your own ideas and feelings and not on facts

**impressionistic:** based on reactions or opinions rather than on specific facts or details

**allot:** to give someone part of an amount of something that is available

**参考译文：**

对这些证据的评价让我得出结论，考试应该保留。比起主观或印象上获得的资料，考试对于学生的学术能力做出令人信服的说明，并使雇主和教育机构的管理人员做出客观的判断。但我并非赞同将考试作为唯一一种评估方式。我建议大部分课程的学习，百分之四十的分数要看持续性评估，剩余的百分之六十要看考试成绩。这样，经过一段时间的学习取得的成绩和考试中得到的分数就能取得一个很好的平衡。

**Reading-Understanding the Text**

**Part A: Comprehending the Text**

*Answer the following questions.*

**1. What kind of argument is presented in the text?**

A defence of examinations

An attack on examinations

√ A discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of examinations

An argument in favour of examinations

**2. What is the author’s view of examinations?**

√ On the whole they are beneficial.

On the whole they are harmful.

On the whole they are not an efficient way to assesslearning.

On the whole they are less effective than continuous assessment.

**3. What is the structure of the introductory paragraph?**

√ introduction to topic > background information on topic > overview of whole text

objectives of text > introduction to topic >background information on topic

background information on topic > objectives of text > overview of whole text

overview of whole text > objectives of text > background information on topic

**4. The conclusion consists of the final two paragraphs and the structure of the conclusion is?**

statement of author’s viewpoint > summary of main points > evaluation of evidence

√ summary of main points > evaluation of evidence > statement of author’s viewpoint

evaluation of evidence > summary of main points > statement of author’s viewpoint

summary of main points > points in favour of examinations > statement of author’s viewpoint

**5. Now, re-read the first sentence only of each of the body paragraphs to complete the chart below.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| For Examinations | Against Examinations |
| they motivate students to work hard | they can cause severe stress for students |
| they provide a standardized way of assessing learning | They encourage memorization rather than understanding |
| they offer a truer reflection of candidate’s ability than continuous assessment | they encourage selective coverage of the syllabus |

**6. Use the information in the framework above to complete the summary of the advantages and disadvantages of examinations in the box below. Write no more than four sentences.**

|  |
| --- |
| Although they cause severe stress for some students, one advantage of examinations is that they encourage students to work hard.  They also provide a standardized method for assessing learning. While it has been argued that examinations encourage memorization rather than understanding on the part of students and selective coverage of the syllabus by teachers, they do offer a more accurate idea of a person’s ability than continuous assessment by coursework. |

**Part B: Identifying Main Points**

*Each of the ten statements below contains information given in one of the sections in the text. Each section is marked with a letter. Have students identify the section from which the information is derived. More than one statement may refer to the same section*

I 1. In a combination of continuous assessment and examinations, the latter should carry the greater weighting.

A 2. Examinations motivate students.

E 3. Examinations may measure what has been memorized rather than understood.

C 4. Students who are not stressed do better in examinations.

D 5. Employers refer to examination results when making decisions on whom to hire.

G 6. Teachers may focus only on teaching for examinations.

F 7. Continuous assessment leads to the bunching of grades.

D 8. Poor examination results make schools check and improve their work.

B 9. Their time limitations mean that examinations reflect real-life time pressures.

C 10. A limited amount of stress maximizes examination performance.

**Part C: Selecting Best Choices**

*The paragraph on Page 142 has been taken from the text but includes ten blanks. You are required to select one word or expression for each blank from a list of words in the word bank provided. You may not use any of the words in the word bank more than once.*

**Word Bank**

A) beneficial

B) clear

C) create

D) demonstrate

E) few

F) higher

G) hold

H) motivates

I) most probably

J) put forward

K) show

L) situation

M) some

N) undertaken

O) unfair

\_\_\_\_\_\_M\_\_\_\_\_\_ education experts have \_\_\_\_\_\_J\_\_\_\_\_\_ evidence to \_\_\_\_\_\_D\_\_\_\_\_\_ that the existence of examinations \_\_\_\_\_\_H\_\_\_\_\_\_ students to take their work seriously. They do this by giving students a \_\_\_\_\_\_B\_\_\_\_\_\_ goal to aim for and most students appreciate examinations for the way they provide an organizing focus for their studies (see, for example, Feng, 2000: 20). Without examinations schools would \_\_\_\_\_\_I\_\_\_\_\_\_ have far \_\_\_\_\_\_F\_\_\_\_\_\_ numbers of poorly motivated students than is the case at present. In the examination itself students are stimulated by the competitive \_\_\_\_\_\_L\_\_\_\_\_\_ to produce the best work they are capable of, and time pressures simply reflect that in the real world all tasks are \_\_\_\_\_\_N\_\_\_\_\_\_ under time constraints — often very tight ones. Examinations stimulate hard work and \_\_\_\_\_\_A\_\_\_\_\_\_ competition, which reflect the realities of the outside world.

**Reading-Developing Your Skills**

**Using Sources and Citations in Writing**

*Look back over the text quickly and you will notice the writer cites other authors and their research (giving the writer’s name, date of publication of the source and a particular page where the point is made).*

**1. How many of these citations are there in the text?**

Five

**2. In your own opinion why do writers cite other writers like this?**

Answers will vary

**3. Which of the following reasons for citations would most good academic writers have in mind? Tick all correct answers.**

√ To make their writing stronger and more convincing

√ To show readers that and how they have researched the topic

√ To show respect to the original thinkers and researchers who first gave these ideas and results

√ To provide readers with other sources of information on the topic

To avoid being accused of stealing the other writers’ ideas and results

*Authors should avoid copying the words of other writers (unless they quote them and give the sources). With this in mind, evaluate the attempts in the table to rephrase the text extract given below. Put a tick to show whether you think the rephrasing is acceptable or not and give reasons.*

Original:

The next consideration is the measuring function of examinations. Society needs a standardized system of assessment for deciding who will continue on to tertiary education, and who will do particular jobs. Many very important selection procedures rely on examination results.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Rephrases | Acceptable | Not Acceptable | Reasons |
| My next consideration concerns the measuring function of examinations. Our society needs a common system for deciding who will enter tertiary education and do particular jobs. Many very important ways of selecting depend on examination results. |  | √ | Too similar to the original wording |
| Examinations are a selection mechanism for determining the individual’s suitability for university education or level of employment. | √ |  | Words are reordered and vocabulary is changed but the meaning of the  original text is retained |
| Examinations are a fair and familiar means of deciding who will be able to study at university or have the best jobs. |  | √ | Some attempts to rephrase but the writer introduces biases not present in the original text |

**Reading-Extending Your Vocabulary**

**Word Group and Citations**

*Re-read the parts of the text containing citations and this time focus on the reporting or citation verbs used by the author. The family of citation verbs is quite a large one. Underline the verbs acceptable for use in citations in the list below.*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| suggest | want | like | report | say |
| argue | claim | need | remember | mention |
| state | point out | forget | indicate | appreciate |

**Word Group and Citations**

*Some citation verbs can be followed by “that” when introducing indirect speech. Students are asked to tick the words in the table which can be followed by “that.”*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Verbs** | **Can Be Followed by “That”** |
| describe |  |
| discuss |  |
| present |  |
| state | √ |
| claim | √ |
| suggest | √ |
| examine |  |
| argue | √ |
| explain | √ |
| reveal | √ |

**The Examination Alphabet**

You have probably seen alphabet books for children. They have words and pictures, and the words are arranged in alphabetical order, for example, with fruit: A is for apple, B is for banana, C is for coconut ... and so on.

Below is an examination alphabet, which is based on key words and phrases from the text. Work with a partner. Discuss each alphabet item and decide whether you both think it is positive (√) or negative (×) and mark your decision in the box. If you think it could be either positive or negative put “=” in the box; put “?” if you do not agree with each other.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Examination Alphabet** | | | |
| advantages of continuous assessment | √ | nervous candidates | × |
| balance of examinations and coursework | √ | objective measurements | √ |
| creating a competitive atmosphere | = | psychological pressure | × |
| drawbacks of memorizing | × | questions: multiple-choice | = |
| experiencing anxiety | × | relaxed students get better results | = |
| fear of failure | × | standardized systems for selection | = |
| giving the goal of getting good grades | √ | time pressures | × |
| hard work | √ | understanding information | √ |
| indications of academic ability | = | validity of examinations | = |
| justified because of the reality of the outside world | √ | well-established measures of achievement | = |
| keeping examination knowledge in one’s head | = | existence of examinations encourages the organization of learning | √ |
| levelling effect when teachers avoid the highest and lowest marks | × | yearly assessment | = |
| measuring the effectiveness of learning | = | zero memorization in coursework | √ |

*Work with a partner. Design a poster for a debate about examinations; include some of the phrases from the Examination Alphabet.*

**Intercultural Notes**

*Read the Intercultural Notes on pp.145-146 and discuss the following questions with your partner.*

1. As for international students who are faced with foreign assessment system, what do they have to know?
2. In Lebanon, what should Lebanon students do after they entered English-medium universities?
3. What kinds of exams are most difficult for Chinese learners abroad?

**Further Information**

*Do some further reading and report what you have learned. The following links may be of help.*

1. English-To-Go's Community Pages Ideas from Our Teachers

[http://www.english-to-go.com/community/good\_teacher.htm](http://edition.cnn.com/2013/12/15/opinion/dunn-norton-three-myths-of-gift-giving/)

2. How to Be a Good Student Teacher

[http://www.wikihow.com/Be-a-Good-Student-Teacher](http://edition.cnn.com/2013/12/15/opinion/dunn-norton-three-myths-of-gift-giving/)

3. Qualities of a Good Student

[https://www.englishforums.com/English/QualitiesOfAGoodStudent/cwlhw/post.htm](http://edition.cnn.com/2013/12/15/opinion/dunn-norton-three-myths-of-gift-giving/)