

ENG 5044 - Writing for the Media I

MA in English and the Media

Writing Task 1& 2

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Writing Task 1

Education might save lives

by Elaine Gerada Gatt

Alcohol poisoning has been deemed the culprit which ended Nigel Smith's life abruptly. Smith, who was only 16 years old, died due to alcohol poisoning, autopsy results have revealed.

The 16 year old, who was on a casual night out with friends, was hanging out at a renowned nightclub located in Paceville, when he was suddenly taken ill. Despite his friends' initial misjudgement at his sudden collapse, the ambulance was called on the spot shortly afterwards. Smith however, died a few days later in hospital. This is the second case related to alcohol poisoning reported by this same newspaper. Last December, a 21 year old who was admitted to hospital after a similar incident, had to have his stomach removed after he had imbibed liquid nitrogen in a cocktail.

Authorities claimed that the victim was under the legal age of drinking and although comments about this individual case were skimpy, Sedqa Official Robert Pace maintained that laws associated with drinking should be enforced especially when dealing with youths. Binge drinking, he said is unfortunately on the increase and it is not helping the vulnerable youths. When asked about the reasons for binge drinking, Robert Pace maintained that young people should be constantly educated about the dangers of alcohol consumed in excess. Education is therefore key in these scenarios.

In the meantime, STRAY nightclub owner has refused to comment further on the issue, since investigations are still under way.

Writing Task 2

Longer hours not welcomed by teachers

by Elaine Gerada Gatt

Thousands of children will be affected by the teachers' industrial action which will take place on the 1st of February, 2014. Announced yesterday, the industrial action came as a reaction to the new policy, drawn up in favour of adjustment to school hours.

The policy, according to the Director General and the Minister for Education is meant to help improve the local scenario in which children invariably have to wait for a longer time period after school finishes until they actually arrive home. Since most parents work full time jobs, they might not have flexible hours which can coincide with school times and this is why such a policy was drawn up. The policy in fact aims to have schools commencing and finishing off an hour later than customary times. Sources said, that in today's scenarios, it has become increasingly important to have coinciding school times. The policy aims to have schools starting and finishing off an hour later than the customary times.

Policy makers have also relied on extensive research which has in fact shown that children actually perform better at schools by starting an hour later. The scientific research carried out by foreign agencies has shown that students' brains, especially those of teenagers, function better after an average of eight hours of sleep. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Education in fact said that government, "is making the necessary changes in the educational system in order to provide a better and more cost-effective education"

Despite its benefits, however this policy has not been welcomed by teachers who were shocked with the suddenness of the decision. " We have been waylaid and that is very disappointing," a local private

school teacher said. A spokesperson for the ministry however said that teachers and their representatives have been involved in the discussions as from the beginning.

The impacts of the decision might be felt for quite a long time. Some teachers believed this would definitely decrease the teacher workforce considering that the remuneration is not adequate. “We have always been looked down on, since we happen to have earlier finishing times than most workplaces, “ one teacher claimed. “What many people fail to realise is that a great part of the work is really and truly carried out after school hours”.

Meanwhile parents’ anger is increasing as this industrial action will coincide with the mid yearly exams, thereby increasing the amount of pressure on students. Whilst applauding the initiative put forward by the Minister for Education, numerous parents were conceivably angry at the union’s decision. “Our educational system has to adapt to the requirements of society” an irate parent explained to one of the reporters. Furthermore this action will also elongate the processing time for receiving results.

Teachers’ Union was quite perceptive of the situation. “We are going to work hard to find the most practical solution, given the scenario.” TU, general secretary Peter Grech claimed. The union is currently holding numerous meetings with the relevant government entities to discuss policies. Keeping in the mind the realities of a fast moving globalised world, TU is also suggesting the introduction of teacher shifts in order to alleviate the problem. Detailed consultation among all the stakeholders is expected to follow.