

Tekst 10

Dominoes tumble for school leavers

The school exam season has now passed. The papers and the telly have duly filled with images of young persons squealing and hugging, and older curmudgeons have repeated their ritual moan about the system dumbing down. But this year, there really is a difference: a shortage of higher education places combined with rising unemployment means that many of Britain's youngsters face a bleak immediate future, no matter how well they have done at school.

For 16-year-olds who elect to leave full-time education this year, the outlook is particularly grim. They are competing not only with adults in the jobs market, but also with 18-year-old school leavers who have been unable to find a university or college place. This domino effect is doubly ironic given that this year's exam performance has been stellar. For the younger age group, GCSE grades improved for the 23rd straight year.

But apart from the miseries who say that the exam system has been watered down to produce artificially inflated results, there are more specific doubts about the cascade of high grades. Universities are particularly concerned about the plummeting number of pupils learning modern languages, which have dropped out of the top 10 favourite subjects. There is to be an urgent ministerial review of language learning, which was made optional six years ago. Since then, the number of language students has dropped by a third.

More encouragingly, the number of pupils taking single science and maths courses has surged, especially in private schools, which, as usual, hugely outperformed the state system in exam results.

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2p 40 Geef van elk van de volgende beweringen aan of deze wel of niet overeenkomt met de inhoud van de tekst.

- 1 As always, there are pessimists complaining about the level of education.
- 2 Doing well at school is no guarantee for doing well at university.
- 3 The growing unpopularity of learning foreign languages should be looked into.
- 4 Private schools have a history of doing better than state-funded schools.

Noteer het nummer van elke bewering, gevolgd door "wel" of "niet".