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Hong Kong is a test-focused city, and we can all attest to that. There is much emphasis put on getting high grades and excelling the DSE examinations to get to university. However, even with a 99.3% rate of admission in Secondary schools, the number is different for ethnic minorities whose dropout rates are increasing it high, with the number for the Nepalese population being 20.6% - the highest among all the EM population as reported in the research analysis paper by the University of Hong Kong's Centre for comparative and public law. And why is it so?

One startling to some, but a no-brainer reasoning to others, is the lack of cultural sensitivity highly seen in majority of the city's teachers, especially in the aspect of teaching NCS Chinese.

However, the lack of progressive Chinese curriculum isn't the only reason for that high number, the Education system itself treats ethnic minority students with a pre-determined destiny of failure, causing students to be demotivated before even trying. And here is why:

Cultural sensitivity is of extreme importance, in this day and age where there is so much diversity in our community, and yet, there is a segregation between the locals and the Ems, that is magnified in the

classroom, where contact is necessary, but disconnected. This is important as it can affect a teacher's ability to teach and the students' ability to learn due to the lack of connection at a culturally responsive level, because their cultures and experiences guide their learning habits, opinions and answers.

One thing to note is that it doesn't mean teachers have to know about each culture to the T, but rather that they are aware -that differences are present and have surface knowledge about the ethnicity that has been in Hong Kong for decades. However, teaching degrees are often missing this as a core. Next yr I am going to be a teacher in training, and I have yet to see a core course serving to teach and guide us to incorporate the vast cultures present in our future classrooms.

Another simple way for the government to address this issue would be to incorporate the ethnic culture ever so present in our society, rather than focusing on the western cultures and traditions? This would broaden the world as a whole for all students, and enable those in minority to feel understood more deeply. And that in itself makes a huge difference for those young souls out there trying to build their own identity guided by the societal, ethnic and socio-economical experiences they face.

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