

UOW College Hong Kong / Community College of City University
Student English Enhancement Unit (SEE U)
Daily English Practice

Week 2

#157 Five Child Prodigies: March Tian Boedihardjo

Skills/ Objectives: Reading, Listening and Writing Skills

PART 1: Before you read...

Preparatory questions

Qt 1: Are you good at math?

Qt 2: Do you know of anybody who is inherently scared of math?

Qt 3: From time to time we learn about children who are so smart and skilled that they are comparable or even superior to adults. What explains this unusual phenomenon?

Qt 4: Boedihardjo, perhaps better known as “Shum Sze Kwan” (literal translation) to most Hong Kong people, was admitted to Baptist University in 2006 at the tender age of nine. How much do you know about Shum Sze Kwan from the mass media?

The answer to Qt 4 will be provided in the next set of exercises.

The answer to relevant question in the preceding set of exercises (Five Child Prodigies: Wong Ka Jeng) are as follows:

Answer to Qt 3: Is Hong Kong culture nurturing musical talent?

Wong Ka Jeng has an answer to this: “There are so many people studying music in Hong Kong, but not so many pursue a career in music. The problem is, so many people study music: But do they actually enjoy music? Many are just too short-sighted and goal-oriented—they all just want to get a certificate. It’s good to have goals, but if the goals become the purpose of everything, then it’s stupid. Of course, this is the problem with Hong Kong’s education system in almost every subject: being goal-oriented, but forgetting the essence of it. It’s quite sad.”

Vocabulary

- enroll (verb): to put someone on an official list for an activity or for membership in a group.
- academically (adverb): in a way that relates to studying and thinking, not practical skills.
- Monopoly (noun): a board game to be won by the player who owns most property

PART 2: Article for Reading

Read the following short BBC article. Like Hong Kong-born pianist Wong Ka Jeng, when young Boedihardjo was often seen with his father, typically a talented man himself, if no less demanding than any ambitious father:

Child star wins university place

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6961865.stm>

PART 3: Listening Comprehension

From the first time Boedihardjo caught the media's attention, we have witnessed a math genius in the making. Parental influence seems to be the key to the continued success of a child prodigy:

What Happens To Child Prodigies When They Grow Up?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZhnO0mllmE>

PART 4: Writing Practice

In the article posted in Part 2, March Boedihardjo's father has given due credit to Baptist University:

March's father said the university had given him confidence it could cope with the demands of teaching a nine-year-old.

Notice the tense inflections in this sentence.

"Said," from "(to) say," is put in the simple past tense.

"Had given," from "(to) give," is put in the past perfect.

Both "said" and "had given" are actions done in the past. When was it? Well, it was some time during an interview where Boedihardjo's father was talking to the mass media about his nine-year-old son enrolling into Baptist University in 2006.

Both "said" and "had given" are past actions, like "said" (no changes) and "gave" (a little different from "had given").

We put "had given" instead of "gave" because Baptist University "gave" Boedihardjo's father confidence and he took it. Then, talking to the media about his son going to Baptist University, he "said" what he was feeling at the time. Now if we put it all together we have—

"Boedihardjo's father said Baptist University had given him confidence...."

Going this way the sentence makes good sense.

Can you explain how the meaning of the sentence will change if we put—

1. "Boedihardjo's father said Baptist University gave him confidence...."

2. "Boedihardjo's father said Baptist University would give him confidence..."

Send your explanations to: see.u@cccu.edu.hk. Remember! Our **SEE U** teachers are always ready to give you feedback.