A-level exam not necessarily the most difficult

By Jasbir Singh

THK A-level examinations are often looked upon as a tough set of examinations. But this is not true, the director of the A-level programme at Sunway College, Hor Poh Choo said.

She said the syllabus covered by students of the course is not that much more than that covered by other pre-university programmes. The only major difference is instead of continuous assessment, A-level students are assessed only once.

"But many students like that, they like not being in the examination mode all the time. They find it more relaxing to spread their studies over the duration of the course and take the examination at the end of the period.

"Discipline brings success," she said, adding that the key to success in the A-level examinations was consistency.

At Sunway College, Hor said, several steps were taken to ensure that students keep up with their studies and maintain the right pace to succeed.

Lecturers assess the students twice every semester and produce an academic report for each student and a copy is passed to parents to ensure that they are aware of their child's progress.

An approach is the mentor-mentee programme where each student is assigned to a lecturer, preferably a subject lecturer for their course, who they can turn to for advice and assistance.

"The approach requires the lecturer to treat the student like their own children and advise them on matters pertaining to their studies or otherwise.

"The idea is to offer students someone to turn to at any time and we want to ensure that students can always approach lecturers for anything," Hor said.

She said the implementation of the programme was also made easier by the fact that all its teaching staff are full-time employees and thus always available for students.

A Parents Day is also organised every six months to strengthen ties with parents and allow parents the opportunity to speak to their children's lecturers.

Results of these efforts are apparent when one looks at the results that the students have achieved.

Lee Tet Woo recently won the coveted A-level Science Prize for the June 1998 examination, scoring the highest marks in Physics, Chemistry and Biology, among all Malaysian students.

In recognition of his success, the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate presented Lee with £100, a commendation letter and a certificate.

"Going through the programme was not easy but the people I met at Sunway College, my lecturers and friends, not only helped me get through the programme but also helped us do well," Lee said.

Another student who did very well in the examinations was straight-A student Slow Hui Ling who is currently reading Economics at Christ's College of the Cambridge University.

Slow, who scored As in Biology, Mathematics, Economics and General Paper, was one of seven students from the college who scored four As in the recent examinations.

But studying, at Sunway College, is not limited just to students. The lecturers of the A-level programme also attend regular seminars to update themselves, thus giving the students an added advantage.

There are two intakes a year for the course which the college has been offering since 1989, in January and July. Examinations are conducted in June and November.