

Idiom by Lon Yan

有勇無謀

you3 yong3 wu2 mou2

During the chief executive candidates' debate, Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor mocked John Tsang Chun-wah for having a "clean desk" - one that is free of documents, saying it was never possible for her to have such a desk, as she had a lot of work to do.

But Tsang retorted that working smart is more important than working hard, and the comeback appeared to find favor with the audience, who applauded.

There have always a few different schools of thought about the tidiness, or lack thereof, of one's desk and what, if anything, it tells about the desk user.

Some say "a cluttered desk is the sign of a cluttered mind". The opposite camp would cite Albert Einstein's famous quip, "If a cluttered desk is a sign of a cluttered mind, of what, then, is an empty desk a sign?"

But whatever relevance the exchange might have on the election results is water under the bridge now. Working hard is good, but working smart is even more important. It may not be a good sign if one has to work so long as to have no time or energy left to organize one's desk.

An idiom that is along the same line is "有勇無謀" (*you3 yong3 wu2 mou2*). "有" (*you3*) is "have," "勇" (*yong3*) "brave," "courage," "無" (*wu2*) "without," "lacking" and "謀" (*mou2*) "a plan," "a scheme."

"有勇無謀" (*you3 yong3 wu2 mou2*), literally, is "have courage, no plan." It means "to be foolhardy," "to be more brave than wise," "to have reckless courage," "bold but not very astute," none of which the trait of a competent leader.

Terms containing the character "謀" (*mou2*) include:

謀事 (*mou2 shi4*) – to look for a job; to plan matters

謀反 (*mou2 fan3*) – to plot a rebellion

謀利 (*mou2 li4*) – to make a profit

謀殺 (*mou2 sha1*) – to commit murder