

To: The Education and Innovation Committee  
Subject: Assessment techniques in Mathematics and Senior Sciences

Dear Committee Members,

I have been teaching Mathematics and Chemistry for approximately 15 years. Returning to work after maternity leave, I asked to be removed from the Chemistry team and only teach Mathematics. This allowed me some time to raise my family without the horrendous workload associated with marking EEI's and ERT's. I am gravely concerned about the QSA and their approach to assessment. The workload was unbearable and extremely confusing. The effect of this was that my preparation and student contact time was very limited, and my stress levels, dangerously high.

I completed school and then taught in Victoria for a number of years before moving to Brisbane. After teaching to a syllabus and working **WITH** students in a "team" situation I was astounded when I first walked into a classroom in Queensland to realise how adversarial it really is. The students would talk about how "you gave me a B on that paper". The teachers played off each other to produce the best results in their class room. My first year in teaching Brisbane was an eye opener when I was presented with the exam paper to "look over" (I can imagine this doesn't seem so shocking to you), and then walking into the Year 12 Mathematics classroom only to find the entire paper on the board with the answers. The teacher before me had presented the paper to their class and completed the solutions! I continue to see teachers adding revision questions that are the same as on the exam and it seems to be acceptable to the majority. The teachers in Victoria are very comfortable teaching to a syllabus so they cover everything that every other student in every other school covers. They are all presented with the same exam and the fairness and equity of the entire situation is very transparent. The consequences of not having to teach to a syllabus are extremely apparent in Queensland's Naplan results. NSW and Victoria have been shown to be superior and this is **not** due to the age difference of the students.

Perhaps more important, is the damaging effect this assessment is having on the students. They have too many long written assignments and are missing valuable curriculum due to the duration of these assignments lasting over the course of a term.

Assessing mathematics/physics/chemistry through long written assignments is not valid for many reasons:

- There is the issue of who actually does the assignments (I tutored during my maternity leave and lost many clients to other tutors who did not have the same moral issues as I did in completing EEI's or ERT's for their clientele),
- These assignments use up much time, which could be used in learning fundamental mathematics, physics and chemistry.

The criteria paragraphs, QSA standards, are the most confusing criteria I have ever seen. They are subjective and unhelpful. It would be much better to add up marks and award percentages, as has always been done. This method is understood by teachers, students and parents and eliminates any subjective judgments. The students and parents are able to understand how they achieved their level of achievement and, more importantly, what they need to do to improve their result.

I am a strong advocate of state-wide exams set by teams of experienced teachers and discipline experts, in preference to the current system of social moderation. These examinations are successful in the southern states who are leaders in the education sector. I have experienced firsthand the stress of students in Year 11 and 12 and I can honestly attest to the fact that the students in Queensland are far more stressed than those I taught in Victoria and yet are still so far behind?

Sincerely,

Teacher of Mathematics and Science in Queensland.