

Education and Innovation Committee

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 10 May 2013 3:20 PM
To: Education and Innovation Committee
Cc: Helen Stevens
Subject: Assessment Methods for QLD Senior School Chemistry, Physics, and Maths
[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

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To Whom It May Concern:

Both my children are benefiting from the QLD External Exam process by studying at Hubbard's School in Toowong. My eldest child is repeating senior studies and my youngest in competing senior studies at Hubbard's in-lieu of regular internal school. My reason for choosing the external studies and external exam process are as follows:

- too much time is spent on assignments and assessment in regular internal school and not enough time of actual teaching. This leads students to have to go elsewhere for learning help. It also leads students to get their assignments done for them by others. One teacher told me "we are not here to teach years 11 and 12, we are here to supervise and assess". Whilst I'm sure she did not mean this literally, she was telling me that the teachers are very limited in how they are allowed to help student beyond the lesson itself. One explanation of the subject matter was all that was given. After that, the student is on their own. Assignments and exams were handed back for a quick review to see the mark and that was it. No learning from where you went wrong. What you didn't know the first time, you never got to learn.
- the level of subject matter - particularly in assignments for maths, chemistry and physics - seems to be of university standard in order for the "Board of Studies" to approve the school's work against defined curriculum, that students are being taught at a higher level before they are being taught the basics. External studies seems to start with the basics and lead into the advanced subject matter. Several students that I know personally have complained that once at uni, they have struggled with the first year or so because they failed to learn the "basics" at school.
- Internal assessment allows for bias and favouritism from the teacher to certain students. External Exams assess every student on the same basis and there is no scope to favour certain students.
- External study allows more time for teaching as all the non-academic aspects of regular school are removed.
- My child who is repeating senior at Hubbard's says that she is learning a greater volume of work, to a greater depth, but is understanding it and actually learning it! She says she never got to do this at her old school - she missed out on a lot of learning and teaching.
- Gradings of As, Bs, Cs have become complicated, subject to assessor interpretation, and don't mean a lot. A percentage tells you a fact!
- the setting of exams internally to the school allows for some teachers to "teach to the exam" and favour their class, or to favour a friend's child and so.
- assignments which are not completed and left at school solely are frequently done by "others" - be they tutors, older siblings, parents or copying a past student's work. This gives a false assessment of a student's true academic ability and knowledge.
- the "cheating" on exams and assignments can not happen under the external system as the student is not known to the person setting the assessment or marking it. A student under this system is graded with their true academic ability and knowledge and enters tertiary study at the level of their true ability. How often do we see OP1 or 2 students perform well below expectation once at uni??

My personal opinion is that students intending to go to university should finish regular school (as we know it now) at year 10, and undergo "tertiary preparation studies" aligned to their desired study field. This could still be done within the secondary school system where the infrastructure currently exist. For example:

- two years of subjects leading towards an Engineering stream

- two years of subjects for Medicine / Health stream
- a commerce business stream
- creative arts
- etc etc. These steaming years could be better controlled by external authorities to ensure consistency in outcome of all students.

Students not intending to go to university could undergo VET studies or subjects better aligned to careers which don't require tertiary study.

I thank you for this opportunity to comment. Please withhold my name.

Yours sincerely

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