

Education and Innovation Committee

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To whom it may concern

Having 30 plus years as a secondary Maths and Chemistry teacher, I have seen many changes with regards to work programmes and syllabi. These last lot of changes concern me greatly –no marks and huge reduction in the basic content in particularly senior chemistry. I believe that Physics and Biology have suffered the same fate.

Instead of marks, our students/ parents are given hazy, hard to understand descriptors. Marks provide a clear cut understanding as to what was lacking, how to improve and a comparison/ placement. Marks to be effective also have to a good balance within the difficulty variation so the students extended. The Criteria break down in Maths is good and it would be better off reflected in the allocation of marks. This way students can see easily the importance of the higher order thinking and application. Students are also able to see how close they are to the next achievement level and what is needed to attain it.

With regards to chemistry the above is also true but the number of EEIs and the time taken narrows the students' chemistry knowledge and application. So instead of teaching Organic Chemistry (naming, all the functional groups' reactions, properties, tests, uses) the students are limited to the alcohols with oxidation to carbonic acids—wine EEI as an example. Yes they do learn so experimental techniques, internet research/copy. Has Chemistry become an extension of English. Tutors are making money out of EEIs. Example—One of my students asked if the due date for the Chem EEI could be put back two days. When I asked why—her response was so her tutor check it for the last time and fix it up. Due date did not move. Same happens with maths assignments. Maybe all summative assessment should be done in class supervised time. But the Universities have this problem also.

Marks are better for all. They are clear cut and easy for all to work with and understand

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