

TIM OATES' ASSESSMENT PAPER – COMMENT FROM JOHN BANGS

Tim's paper is very fair and comprehensive. The things on which I want to comment are additions, not amendments, as they say in the trade.

The first is the effect of the shift away from straight A levels to AS/A2. I cannot help but think that this move has been a victim of its own good intentions. We need to question the impact of modularity on standards. The extended project was supposed to reintroduce extended study but, attached as a higher standard, it does not provide an opportunity for such study to many students.

So, we need to factor in what has been lost in the old A level, where students had the opportunity to study particular subjects in depth and whether this has affected standards.

The second elephant in the room is teacher assessment. There is little evidence about the overall accuracy of teachers' judgements when they are assessing for summative purposes. Professional development and a significant part of the teacher training programme should be devoted to key issues to watch out for in relation to summative teacher assessment.

We also need to interrogate the impact of the market between exam boards. Do exam boards themselves lower standards in order to make their products more attractive? I'm sure they do not, but it is a question that needs answering and nailing. It also begs the question about whether we need a single examination board for England to partner the Wales WJEC.

Just some additional thoughts to match a very useful and interesting paper.