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Impact of A Level reform on post-16 provision

Conference Paper Abstract

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Abstract

Schools in England encounter numerous education reforms, which create opportunities for meaningful change and to equip students with 21st century skills necessary to thrive in our globalised world. A recent and controversial education reform in England was the decoupling of the AS and A Level qualifications (Ofqual, 2018). These qualifications are completed by students aged 16 to 18, and determine admission to university. The reform signified a shift from modular to linear learning, where students study subjects in greater depth.

To explore how this reform was realised in practice, we conducted 11 semi-structured interviews with teachers at a diverse range of schools in England. This represents one of the first attempts to examine the impact of this reform (for others, see Ofqual, 2018; UCAS, 2018; Williamson & Vitello, 2018). Our analysis demonstrates examples of how teachers exerted their autonomy (within constraints), leading to different pathways of response (as in Goodson, 2001).

This presentation explored how the reform influenced the programme of study at schools, what the implications for students may be and how school level-changes reflect or deviate from the pedagogical aims of the reform.

References

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