

Resits in high-stakes examinations: the unusual case of A levels

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Key words: A levels, examination (exam), modular, resits, learning

Introduction

A levels are high-stakes examinations in England, serving the functions of selection, certification and evaluation of sixth-form education and, according to the records over the past decade, A levels appear to have succeeded in all of them. They have remained the chief selection tool for universities in England (Hodgson et al. 2005). At the same time, performance in A levels has been steadily improving every year since 2000. While the UK government puts the improvement down to better teaching and learning, others believe that A levels have become easier (de Waal 2009) with their new structure. Unlike many other high-stakes exams which test students in one-off sessions at the end of a course, A levels use a modular approach under Curriculum 2000, which was a major educational reform in England with the objective of broadening access and the curriculum in post-16 education (Hodgson et al. 2005). The current A level has an equally-weighted AS and A2 module, to be taken in Year 12 and Year 13 respectively, either in January or in June, each with two assessment units (three units per module for exams prior to 2010), and students are allowed to resit past units during the two-year sixth-form course with no limit or penalty (QCDA n.d.). This paper examines the effects of the resit policy of A levels on student learning in sixth-form education.

Methodology and methods

The findings in this paper are based on the results of a research study which used a student questionnaire followed by individual interviews of students, teachers, school/college supervisors and university admissions tutors. The students and teachers/supervisors were from three colleges (schools) in England: a further-education college, a sixth-form college and a school with a sixth-form in the independent sector. The college's average grade per A-level entry in 2009 ranges from B/C to A/B. Participation in the research was voluntary, based on a closed setting and overt access (Bryman 2004). In October 2008, 267 Year 13 students (137 boys and 130 girls) took part in a questionnaire exercise (45% return rate), which was designed (Oppenheim 1992) to gather data from "factual" questions as well as open and "attitude" questions about the students' views of resits and how they made resit decisions. Fourteen students (8 boys and 6 girls), selected randomly from different colleges and who were all taking resits in January 2009, participated afterwards in a series of individual interviews. The structure of the student interviews can be described as a modified version of Seidman's (1991) "3-interview method" using Schutz's (1972) theory of "time span of action". The students were interviewed thrice, each for about 40 minutes, in December 2008, February and April, 2009 to talk about their resit experience and sixth-form education in general. Teachers and college supervisors (form tutor/heads), one of each from each college, were interviewed in May for an hour each. The aim was to provide triangulation (Cohen et al. 2000) and to find out more about their college's practice. Admissions tutors from three disciplines in two universities, viz., medicine, computer science and social work (entry requirements ranging from top As to BBB), were interviewed in June for an hour each to learn about their discipline's selection criteria and their views of the resit system. All interviews were semi-structured; they were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were analysed through reading, reflecting, linking and coding to identify emerging themes and common or different patterns of responses (Bazeley 2007).

Structure of the discussion

The discussions in the paper are based on the questionnaire analysis and emerging themes from the interviews¹. They are presented in three sections. The first section focuses on students resitting A-level exams, in terms of the students' resit decisions and their performance in the resits. The second section looks at a wider aspect of the modular resit system in terms of how it affects student learning in sixth-form education. The third section extends the discussion to sixth-form education as a whole, by examining the effectiveness of the resit policy in terms of its implications on the selection, certification and evaluation functions of A levels.

Resit pattern, decision and results

According to the students' answers to the four questions on the questionnaire about resits, including limits on resit units and times, who pays and what happens to the result, the students' knowledge of the resit rule was good (on average, they answered 3 of the 4 questions correctly) and 88% (234/267) knew the "replace result only if better" rule. In 2007, the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA, formerly the QCA) conducted a review of the resit system (QCA 2007). It reports that on average, about a third of candidates sat a unit more than

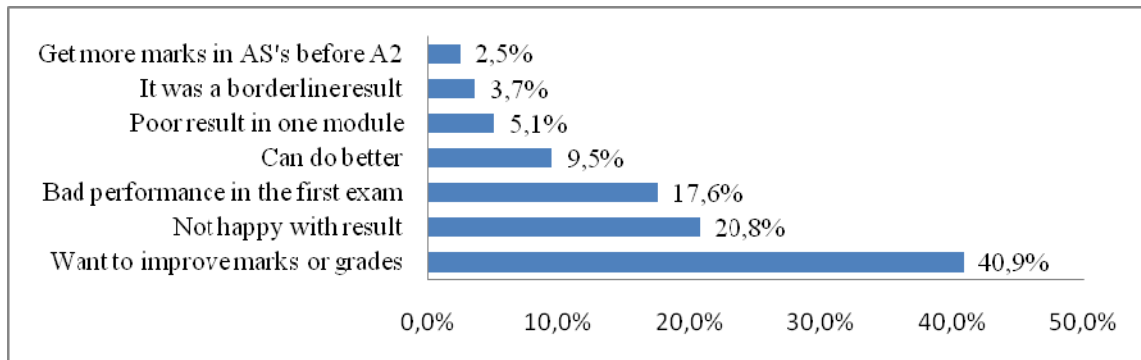
¹ Each interviewee is identified by a letter code. 3 dots indicate omission of some texts; [] contains words inserted to explain the context.

once and few sat a unit more than twice. The findings of this study suggest that the proportion of students taking resits could be much higher than one third and multiple resits are not uncommon. 87% (232/267) of the students in the questionnaire indicated that they were resitting, mostly in January. The resits covered the full grade range, over half of which were at A-C grades and 20% of the units resat had already got an A in the old result. On average, the students resat nearly two subjects each (1.9 subject). The figures refer only to resits in Year 13 and the resit statistics of the entire sixth-form are likely to be much higher. Half of the students in the interview indicated that they had already resat some units in Year 12 and some were resitting units for the third time in Year 13.

The resit decision

The students' reasons for resitting (some more specific than others), according to the questionnaire, are as follows:

Figure 1. Students' reasons for resitting



The students in the interview made similar remarks about their reasons, as shown in the quotations below:

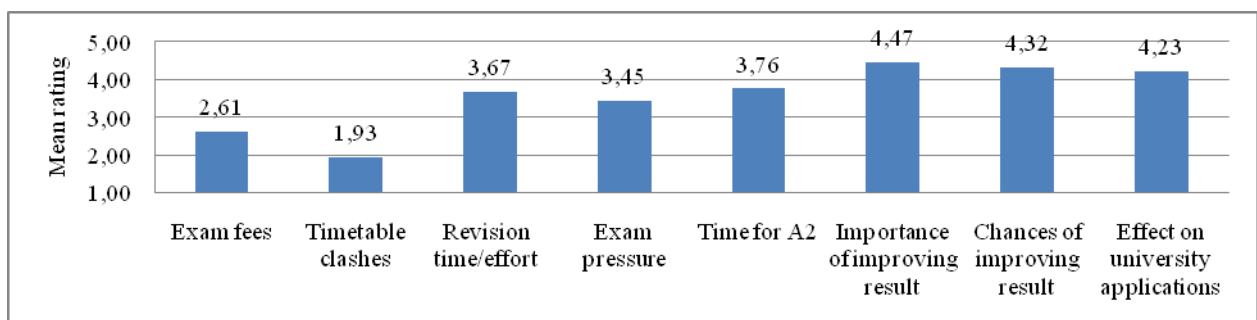
It's quite an easy module to do again; might as well try to get as high a mark as you can because you don't have to revise for it that much. (L)

I got really bad grades for all my History so I'm just going to retake all of them. (C)

The grades weren't good enough and I felt that I didn't do myself justice by just getting a D and, you know, just accepted that, and I thought, no, I can do better. (F)

The students were asked to rate on a 5-point scale a list of factors on the questionnaire in terms of their importance for their resit decision. The results (while acknowledging that the rating scale is ordinal, the mean rather than the median is used to highlight finer rating differences between factors) are shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Mean ratings of the importance of different factors in the students' resit decisions
(Rating: 5 = extremely influential; 1 = not at all influential)



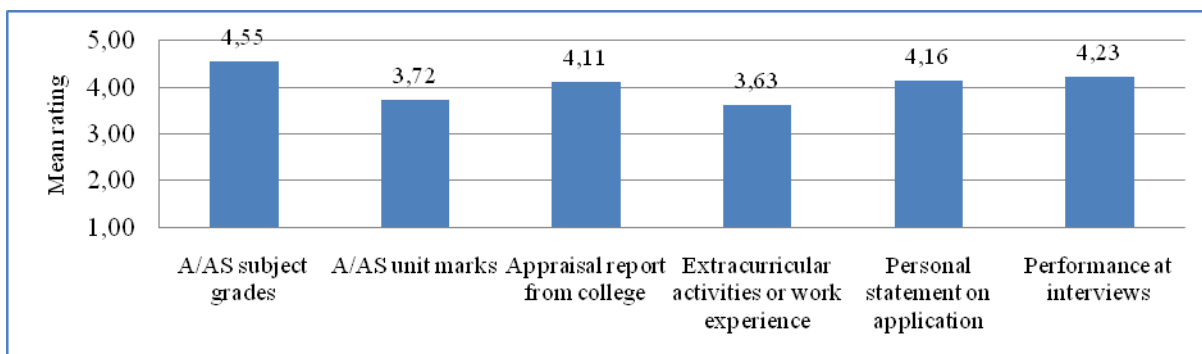
Three factors were clearly the most influential: "importance of improving result", "chances of improvement" and "effect on university applications". These took precedence over other concerns the students might have, such as time for revision or A2 studies. The least influential factors were "timetable clashes" and "exam fees". These findings were largely supported by the students in the interview, as shown in the following comments:

I just needed to get an overall B to get into the university... it's easier to do, to resit it rather than to wait and try to bring my grade up in A2 exams which are much harder. (G)

The money is definitely not a worry because like my parents would want me to do well, and they are like, we will pay the money for you to do it if you think you can do better. (F)

60% of the students in the questionnaire (152 out of 255 who answered) thought that universities and employers do not care whether their candidates have resat some AS/A2 modules or not. The students' mean ratings of the six factors given on the questionnaire in terms of their importance for university selection are given in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. Mean ratings of the importance of different factors in university admission selection (Rating: 5 = extremely influential; 1 = not at all influential)



In sum, the students were mostly concerned about improving their A-level results because they thought that these are what universities look for and that it does not matter to universities if they achieve their grades through resits.

Factors contributing to improvements in resits

Eleven of the fourteen students in the interview improved their results in at least one of the units resat, by a grade or a higher mark within a grade, while three did worse. The 2007 QCA report shows that the majority of candidates did better on their second attempt, improving on average by 15 to 25 UMS (uniform mark scale) marks. While it is clear that students are able to improve in resits, it will be useful to know how they do it. Through talking to the students about their resit experience, some factors became more prominent in explaining the resit improvement.

One reason why the students improved in their resits was because they underperformed in the first exam. Many of the students in the interview admitted to underestimating the demands of A levels when they started sixth-form. Similar findings are found in the research of Hodgson and Spours (2005). Compared to the nine or ten subjects in GCSE, the fewer number of subjects had made the workload seem relatively easy. Knowing that they could resit also explains to a certain extent the lack of urgency in some students in terms of the need to work hard from the outset. The relaxed attitude of the students was observed by the teachers, as illustrated in the following comment:

The first January, oh yes, totally. They don't revise at all, which is why we do the mock because we want to shock them into the fact that they have to do some work. But a lot of them take a relaxed view. (Q)

In addition, the students were faced with a new learning environment in sixth-form, such as having more free periods and being more responsible for their own study and revision plans. Some students had wrongly assumed that, since they had sailed through GCSEs effortlessly, it would not be that much different for the ASs.

When I came here, I was quite arrogant, a bit cocky with my knowledge. I did quite well with my GCSEs, so I did not understand how hard the work was going to be, and what quite a big step up it is. (E)

Another reason for the improvement was exam feedback. The students learned about the weakness in their performance in the first exam when they went over it with their teachers afterwards. Two went further by asking for their papers back and were then able to identify the areas where they scored poorly. The students said that the exam feedback had helped them prepare for and improve in their resits.

The third reason for the students' improvement was because the students took the resits later in the course, in Year 13, when they acquired further learning of the subject, better skills and improved technique. When students studied for their first units in Year 12, they might not have fully appreciated the complexities of the subject. As they continued to mature intellectually in Year 13, some had come to a better understanding of the earlier units. The 2007 QCA report calls this the "maturation benefit". Similar comments were made by the teachers in the interview:

Psychology, it's a subject where some of them get it instantly and some of them will take a year and then they still don't get it. So, some of them are better to do the resits then because they just suddenly get it. (Q)

The only way to succeed in maths is to practise a lot, and so just by that extra amount of time continuing to study maths, they could then naturally do better. (V)

Learning the subject at the A2 level had also helped some students in their AS resits as they learned the subject from a different perspective or synoptically. Apart from subject knowledge, skills such as essay-writing, evaluation, problem solving and analysis are all important in answering questions at A levels, so are exam-taking skills, such as time management, planning and structuring answers, etc. All these skills are further taught and practised in Year 13. The students said they were able to apply them better in the resits.

Finally, the students were generally more motivated towards the end of the course. When they started Year 13, it suddenly dawned on many of them that half of their sixth-form years had gone. Some also found that they were not on track with their target grades. Resits thus represented their last chance. By January in Year 13, most students would have received conditional offers from universities. Invariably, motivation is connected to a goal or purpose of intention (Pintrich 1989). The clearer goal had helped some students become more focused:

I was quite confident last year in all the things I did, so didn't bother doing those things, but now I went to universities to see where I wanted to go, and work for it...I didn't really have the motivation last year. (J)

Impact of the resit policy on sixth-form education

According to the students' accounts, they generally started sixth-form with excitement and high hopes, from the pride of continuing into post-compulsory education to experiencing a new learning environment, having the satisfaction of choosing their own subjects and looking forward to going to university afterwards. However, that period did not last long. The students were soon given target or minimum expected grades, and the rest of sixth-form was dedicated to sitting and resitting exams in order to meet the targets and the goal of exam success.

Target or minimum expected grades

In general, students are given an assessment of their academic ability at the start of sixth-form (systems, such as ALPS (A Level Performance System) and ALIS (A Level Information System), are widely used). The advantage of the target or minimum expected grades is that they provide a clear common goal for both students and teachers. The disadvantage is that they may pigeonhole the students right from the start by judging them largely on past performance rather than their potential, as shown in the following comment of one of the college supervisors:

Most departments are now very good at tracking the students against their minimum expected based on their GCSE grades, but that is the minimum, it's not an inspirational grade. (R)

Complacency may prevail for those with good GCSE grades. On the other hand, the system does not seem to cater well for "late developers". Only one of the students interviewed talked about having his target grades from Year 12 upgraded after a lot of hard work at his ASs. Others seemed content with their target or predicted grades:

When we joined, we got our GCSE results taken into like calculated and came up with our predicted grades. I got a C for everything, so, and I am pretty happy with that. (F)

Regardless of whatever inadequacies they may have, target grades play a very significant part in sixth-form education. Students largely choose university courses based on them. Teachers and schools/colleges use them to provide the academic reference in support of their students' UCAS² applications (the predicted grades on the UCAS form, however, may not be exactly the same as the target grades given to the students; research by Snell et al. (2008) shows that students do not necessarily know what their schools have put on their UCAS forms). Throughout the course, teachers rely on target grades to keep track of their students' performance. Typically, if they are fallen short, the students will be advised to resit, as commented by one of the college supervisors below:

We've also got the target minimum grade of the student to guide us, what they should be achieving. If it's below that, yes, take a resit. (U)

Taking the exam early

The modular system of A levels allows students to take the exam upon completion of a unit rather than to wait until the end of sixth-form. One reason why some students underperformed in their first exam is because they were asked to take their first units early, typically in January instead of June. This could be for the experience (as a "rehearsal") or for more chances to resit later. Here is how one student described the experience in her college:

History...we rushed to do them in January so we get a second chance. Some people here have got 2As, so now they are done. Some people retaking both just like a need to bump up everything. (M)

² UCAS stands for Universities & Colleges Admissions Service, which manages undergraduate-degree applications in the UK.

This practice has many disadvantages. The teaching could have been rushed and some students might not have been sufficiently quick or mature to fully appreciate the demands of the subject, as in a student's comment below:

In January last year, I got a B and a C, it's sort of like oh, why did I get a B and a C, I am sure I put effort in...but now I've done the resits, I realize that I just didn't know enough when I sat it then. (N)

The following quote from a teacher summarises his reservation about early exams:

I don't like those early exams. I think it's disruptive to teaching a bit. It doesn't allow formal and good understanding. It's bit of a taste of it in the study to know how to do the exam. I don't like it but to be honest, the positive side I guess is that they have the exam experience. (T)

Resit strategy

A lot of time seemed to have been spent by both teachers and students on formulating resit strategies. Here is how one teacher described the system in her college (the original quote is much longer and more detailed):

We've got this grid system that has got all the UMS points on it and all the raw points and it has got like an AS and A grid, and we write their scores in each module and we work out what they want to get in A2, and we work out the maths ... decide whether they should resit or not... and we do it through the year. (Q)

The strategy was largely to get the best combination of marks for the desired final grade. The common tactic was to resit the easier ASs or units with the lowest mark in the module. Below is a student's description of his approach:

It would depend on how easy it was to raise the grade, and also whether... a possibility that it could drop down ... I resit the module to raise the grade up so it would be definite, even if I muck up the A2 level. (G)

On the other hand, some students, particularly the lower achievers, found it hard to decide and did not think that they had clear advice or strong support from their teachers, as illustrated by the following student's remark:

They sort of left that more up to me...I knew I did really badly in the exams so I just wanted to retake them... it wasn't like we had a massive meeting and they told me that it was alright. (A)

Revision tactics

One general concern about resits is whether students have enough time to revise because they have A2 modules to learn and other exams to take. The mean rating for this given by the students on the questionnaire was 3.7 on the 5-point scale (Figure 2 refers). In general, this did not seem to be a worry for the students in the interview. They claimed that they could always manage to find time for revision, sometimes at the expense of not doing sports or other extra-curricular activities. The important thing to them was how widespread their exams were (e.g. the gap between the AS and A2 exams), as most preferred to revise just before the exam.

With the main focus being on exam success and given the opportunities to resit, some students resorted to some dubious tactics in revising for their exams, in what one teacher described as students "trying to box clever":

I think there is probably more "trying to box clever"; they might be more concerned with one exam, thinking if I really focus on this one, and if I don't do well in that one, I can always resit that. Certainly if they do not plan their revision or their time well, they are always struggling with particular subjects. (T)

His comments matched the tactics described by some of the students. Other strategies of the students included revising only selected topics, as shown in the following quotations.

There are four topics, and I revised three out of four and you only need to answer two out of four, so if I revised three topics, then it gives me a choice. (B)

I concentrated on a couple of different topics so I didn't have to revise everything ... I just got through a few main things the teachers said generally come up quite a lot. (A)

This is typical of students adopting a surface approach to learning (Entwistle 1998). The outcome is that the students are unlikely to retain their knowledge, which is clear in some of the students' comments:

Basically your brain sort of goes from one subject to the next and basically sort of use all the information, dump that, use the next sort of information and get rid of that ... So, you've just got to learn like the next part of the syllabus and then...do those modules and then do the retakes if you need to. (K)

I'm one of those people where when I revise, I learn, learn, learn, and do my revision as much as I possibly can. I do the exam and then a couple of weeks later, I just wouldn't, I've forgotten all of them. (M)

Learning to the exam

One concern with exam coaching is that it aims at getting exam results rather than enriching learning (Stobart 2008). To promote transparency of assessment, awarding bodies in England all publish their exam requirements, past question papers, mark schemes, and so on. The students in the interview talked a lot about how they were taught to answer different types of questions in order to score well in A levels. The general perception was that there is a formula to write to and examiners mark according to a convention based on a specific structure or framework of answers rather than individuality. Here is how one student described her approach to History exams:

We have to, in the introduction, state all the important factors, state your arguments... after the different factors, you have to link in the title and the arguments and it's the same with every essay. We have done it over and over and over again... and in the resits. The skills you learn from doing two years of History. (M)

As pointed out by Torrance (2007), transparency of assessment encourages instrumentalism, with the result that assessment procedures and practices can come to completely dominate the learning experience and weaken, rather than strengthen, the development of learner autonomy. Below is another student's remark:

It's exam technique all over again, I was more taught this year, well, this is what you need to include for this type of questions and so I did, just wrote to a formula and I feel like it works this time [in the resit]. (H)

Unnecessary resits

Public exams have their limitations because they measure the performance of students in a sample of a defined syllabus at a specified duration of time under controlled conditions. A few students talked about having a "bad day" in exams, which could be due to stress, illness, nerves, and so on. Resits provide a mechanism to address occasions like these. Some students admitted that had they adopted a more positive approach to learning earlier, some of the resits might not have been necessary. Students need maturity to do well in exams and different students may reach that maturity at different times. Some would do better by taking the exams later rather than taking them early and then resitting them. Other resits, such as those already with grade A results, are taken not for the attainment but to boost aggregate totals for university selections. The original purpose of resits is affected by the second-chance mentality and questionable exam strategies in order to achieve the all important best-possible A-level results.

Implication of the resit policy on the effectiveness of A levels

The next section focuses on the implication of the resit policy on the effectiveness of A levels in serving the functions of certification, evaluation and selection of sixth-form education.

Certification and evaluation needs

98% of the students in the questionnaire (256 out of 262) wanted to go to university (this could be due to the colleges in the study being above average in league tables). The students in the interview saw university education as a pathway to success. To them, sixth-form education was just a stage they needed to take before university. All these strategies of early exams, resit plans, revision tactics and learning to the exam discussed earlier point to one conclusion: the students were motivated by the extrinsic gains of exam grades rather than the intrinsic awards of interest in learning for its own sake, and they aimed for performance goals rather than learning goals (Pintrich 1989). As others have commented before, A levels have become de facto university entrance exams (Lambert and Lines 2000) and they are now a "means to an end": it is all about grades for university rather than knowledge and understanding (de Waals 2009). In other words, the certification function of the examination has been side-lined.

In its review of 14-19 education and training, the Nuffield Foundation (2009) asks "what counts as an educated 19 year-old in this day and age". It lists several qualities including, knowledge, competence, practical capability, moral seriousness and a sense of responsibility towards the community. These qualities are important but not all of them are, or can be, tested by A levels in the present structure. These days, the term 'certification' in A levels commonly refers to students "cashing in", i.e. accepting the grades achieved as final awards to be certificated. As for evaluation, the performance of schools and teachers and that of the education system are all measured in terms of exam success. One can argue that this has always been the case in the past (Broadfoot 1996), but the modular resit system, with its over assessment focus, has likely worsened the situation rather than improved it. Under pressure (e.g. league-tables), schools may adopt strategies of having students take exams early or even encourage resits. Teachers may feel the need to act in accordance with societal norms by adopting a view that succeeding in exams is in the best interests of the students. Below is a teacher's comment about the need to teach to the exam:

We'd love to go off in big tangents but no, no, to the exam, we need to... I think more and more students expect you to, yeah, it's all about exams. (Q)

Resitting exams is sometimes likened to re-taking driving tests. A person with a driving license is entrusted with driving on public roads, regardless of the number of test attempts. Similarly, one can argue that the resit system of A levels is adequate for certifying students' performance as long as the students have demonstrated attainment of the knowledge and skills required. On the other hand, if a driving test were to rank and select drivers for grand-prix racing, it would be doubtful whether drivers who needed many re-takes would be considered favourably. For similar reasons, the resit system has become an issue for A levels because resits can be seen as giving some candidates an unfair advantage for selection to university. Below is a comment made by one of the university admissions tutors about results achieved through resits:

It's still an achievement. But in the light of the massive competition, you see, so many people are fighting to get in, that one speck on the horizon and you've had it. So, it's not a reflection of the candidate, it's a reflection of the intensity of the competition. (W)

Selection needs

The research of Hodgson et al. (2005) indicates that the objective of broadening the curriculum in the Curriculum 2000 reform has not been realised as university offers are still made largely on the basis of three A levels. This can be because A levels, despite the structural changes, continue to be subject-based qualifications. While UCAS uses a point system (called the UCAS tariff which equates different qualifications), many offers based on A levels continue to be expressed in terms of subject grades, as shown by the entry requirements of various undergraduate courses on university websites (e.g. Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, accessed in June 2010). The students in the interview all talked about their offers in terms of three A-level grades (including offers made in UCAS points). Under the current admissions system for sixth-form students in England, university offers are, in general, conditional, made largely on the basis of the students' past results and predicted grades. Understandably, schools and colleges will want to give as good a prediction as possible for their students and there have been concerns about exaggeration by some of them. Research by UCAS (2005) shows that predicted grades were only about 45 per cent accurate. In the absence of the actual exam results, however, the admissions tutors in the interview all said that they had no choice but to rely on predictions of schools/colleges for shortlisting students or making offers.

The admissions tutor for medicine (whose university is amongst the best in England) said he would not consider students who had taken resits. The other two said they would not exclude resitters from their shortlists but would want to know the reasons why they resat. All three interview applicants before making offers but in general, a lot of undergraduate courses these days do not normally interview, as indicated on many of the university websites (e.g. Newcastle, Durham, Brunel, accessed in June 2010). Resits are not usually mentioned in students' personal statements or schools' supporting reference. Information about resits can, however, affect the ranking order of student applicants. It has been reported that many universities now start asking for individual unit grades at the end of Year 12 (de Waal and Cowen 2007). This will defeat the original purpose of allowing resits, which is to avoid students being unduly disadvantaged in single-exam sittings. Such a development is, nevertheless, understandable as universities are getting increasingly worried that the resit system has been exploited by schools/colleges and students. The findings of a recent survey (ACS 2009) indicate a strong underlying view among university admissions officers that teachers concentrate too much on teaching to the exam and students focus too heavily on sitting and resitting exams and, consequently, sixth-form education is not developing qualities in learning that are essential for university education. Similar comments were made by the admissions tutors in the interview:

I don't think A levels are very good foundations at all for university. The teaching is very much to assessment criteria and it's not about deep learning...that passion for learning...and they are not ready to do that. I have to devise the first-year course that helps bring people to where we need them to be. (Y)

They come with a much more exam-oriented focus now. They don't want to learn for learning's sake, they don't really want to know about the subject, they want to know if this is going to be on the exam. It's not a positive thing. I don't know where that comes from...it is more than exam emphasis and because they are doing this modular thing and they take them and they do the resits. The other problem of resits is that they will turn up having forgotten everything, it's unfortunate but it's true. (R)

As pointed out by the admissions tutor for medicine, one knock-on effect of the poor preparation of students for university education is that if the students end up not being able to cope with the demands of higher education, the failure or drop-out rates could be high or the quality of university education would be compromised.

Summary

On the surface, the steady improvement in results may suggest that A levels work. Closer examination, based on admittedly a limited number of cases investigated in this study, has, however, revealed several shortcomings. First, the efforts and hard work of many teachers and students are undermined as resits are seen as easy ways to improve results and the lack of control of resits can lead to abuse of the system. Second, the early assessment of students in sixth-form in the form of target grades based largely on previous performance means that students can be pigeonholed and some can become complacent, sitting and resitting exams only to meet targets. Third, the focus on exam technique, emphasis on surface learning and the second-chance mentality do not prepare students well for university or, indeed, life-long learning. Finally, many resits are unnecessary. They are a waste, not just for the students, but in terms of the money, time and manpower spent on administering the exams. If that money and resources were to be re-invested into teaching and learning, the result could be more productive.

A levels and other 14-19 qualifications in England have undergone major structural reforms over the past decade (Nuffield 2009). The UK government's approach to these reforms does not seem to be well organised as it tries to integrate academic and vocational qualifications in an effort to broaden access. New qualifications, such as the diplomas, are introduced alongside existing ones, such as GCSEs and A levels, in a "mix and match" qualifications framework (QCDA n.d.) with no clear overall vision. The piecemeal approach has caused some confusion in the perception of A levels by their users. For instance, rather than appreciating the use and benefits of a modular resit approach, such as clearer learning outcomes and formative feedback (Hayward and McNicholl 2007), teachers and students involved in the study saw A levels much the same as before, i.e. as a qualification for university entrance, but with the advantage of resit opportunities. The modular resit approach of A levels can and do motivate many more young people to continue into post-16 education in England and help raise attainment by providing shorter-term assessment goals and chances to rectify underperformance in single exam-sittings. However, due to a lack of appreciation for the rationale behind the reform, no control of resits and the highly competitive nature of selection by university, this well-intentioned policy has produced some deleterious effects when it comes to actual practice in sixth-form education. It is time for the UK government to rethink what A levels stand for in the 14-19 education landscape and how to address the certification, evaluation and selection needs of sixth-form education.

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