My teaching experience - secondary education - art & design - 31 years.

I have successfully taught pupils through O Grade, Standard Grade, Intermediate, Higher & Advanced Higher courses.

Many pupils have gone onto study at university or are working in the arts as well as following other career paths.

I mention this to highlight that it isn't change that's the problem, it's how it's implemented, supported, time managed & funded.

Since NQ's started I have never felt as confused by the lack of clarity, direction & resources, as I do currently.

The workload to implement current SQA courses has increased significantly.

- The SQA site is cumbersome.
- The course descriptions run into pages.
- Course content is unclear.
- 'Updates' are confusing.

I'm on a Scottish art teachers group through social media (the best place to get information, often finding out about updates to courses & links to information by chance). It is the best source of support & advice for many art & design teachers, who feel they are swimming against the tide. Everyone is second guessing, wondering if we are 'getting it right' for our pupils. Gathering insight by 'word of mouth'.

- The course content & expectations feel like guesswork - this wasn't the case with Standard Grade.
- There is no course book to study for the written exam (why is there a written exam for art & design at N5 anyway? (There never was for O Grade or Standard Grade.)
- It inhibits many pupils from taking the subject.
- Each department across Scotland is reinventing the wheel for written work.
The department I work in has no principal teacher, the faculty head is a different subject specialist and there aren't any 'subject advisers' in our region to keep us updated.

In services are rarely subject specific.

SQA host their information days in Stirling, not practical for many of us.

It's also clear there isn't a level playing field across Scottish schools in terms of teaching & learning time from S1 - S6, to cover skills required for presentation at SQA certificate level, yet are expected to cover the same amount of practical work & sit the same written exam.

Teachers often have different year groups & NQ levels to teach within the same class, classes which often include pupils with special needs.

Removal of subject specialists in primary schools adds to the lack of core skills pupils arrive in secondary school with too.

Reduction in teaching time over years S1/2/3 conflates this.

Departments across Scotland don't have the same financial resources to implement courses either.

As an experienced teacher, I am disappointed there has never been any consultation on SQA course content from subject specialist teachers at the 'chalk face', so I do appreciate the opportunity to contribute now.