

CrossRef DOI of original article:

1 Seeking to Establish a Better Balance Between the Technical and
2 Social Aspects of Assessment Practices in the English Inspection
3 System as Well as Bridging the Gap between the' Figured
4 Worlds' of Inspectors and Teachers So That Each Can Become
5 Part of a More Effective Community of Evaluation Practice

6

7 *Received: 1 January 1970 Accepted: 1 January 1970 Published: 1 January 1970*

8

9 **Abstract**

10 382ULJP Copyright ID: 573354

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12 *Index terms—*

13 **1 INTRODUCTION**

14 The ideas shared here developed and entered my practice as an inspector/researcher after attending a presentation
15 given by Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam ??BERA, Cardiff, 2000). At this conference Wiliam outlined his thoughts
16 for developing a theory of formative assessment. Having just completed doctoral research in this field I agreed
17 with his views that assessment for learning in the 'figured world' (Holland e al, 1998) of the classroom is of
18 prime importance but at the same time was equally frustrated by my observations and understanding that full
19 implementation of this assessment is limited if London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences
20 teachers with the intention of improving pupil learning and teacher planning. For this model to be effective
21 teachers must change role from delivery person to coach or scaffolder to allow pupils to change role from in
22 attendance to absorbent recipient for example or metacognitive reflector. Similarly, inspectors will need to cease
23 exerting power over teachers by changing role from judge to critical friend to communicate more effectively and
24 lessen tension. Examples of how pedagogy and critical and social aspects of assessment affect pupil motivation,
25 love of learning, independent thinking and grasp of subject matter are drawn from the writer's experience of
26 being part of the English state education system as a pupil, teacher, inspector, and researcher over the period
27 1949-2023 before sharing what happened when an inspection team trialled 'roles by metaphor' during a sixth
28 form inspection.

29 inhabitants of other 'figured worlds' who exert pressure over schools do not fully understand the complexity
30 of the subject under consideration. I refer to politicians, school inspectors, parents, employers, school governors
31 etc.

32 Wiliam explained the term 'figured world' as ?we mean a socially and culturally constructed realm of
33 interpretation in which characters and actors are recognised, significance is attached to certain acts, and particular
34 outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents?we engage in a limited
35 range of meaningful acts or changes of state....as moved by a specific set of forces (Holland et al, 1998, 52).

36 The concept outlined above is particularly useful when considering the tensions existing between inspection
37 and teaching pedagogy. As adults we all inhabit many 'figured worlds' which support but often limit our
38 understanding of other worlds beyond our direct experience. Our worlds are often dominated by forces beyond
39 our immediate control and these forces often adversely affect either our understanding or our capability to act
40 differently from the norm at that time. One such force, which I recognised as prevalent and having a major
41 impact on both teachers' and inspectors' 'figured worlds' was the way government initiatives had concentrated
42 minds on assessment as a 'technical craft,' by emphasizing the value of tests and league tables of test results.
43 The publication of these comparative league tables supposedly functioned as a spur between individuals and

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44 institutions in the pursuit of improvement (Broadfoot 1999). In my experience, improvement in test results
45 resulting from teaching to the test or even teaching the test have proved of limited value in encouraging learning
46 at a deeper level by persuading pupils to take responsibility for their own actions ??Burke, 2011, 19-24). I know
47 deep learning is not always appropriate, but neither is being tightly controlled by tests and subjected to a narrow
48 curriculum. I would argue that Government agencies in the pursuit of improving standards have ignored the
49 social dimensions of assessment, which could be used to aid learning (Lyons, 1993). Assessment as evident in
50 National testing for example, is designed to find out what the pupils do not know and is therefore essentially
51 punitive. The designers of this form of assessment allow the public to assume that tests are 'neutral' measures,
52 which only require further technical skills to make them more effective. Those who adopt a constructivist view
53 of assessment know that this is far from the truth and that assessment is as much of an art as a science. When
54 assessing a piece of writing for example, experienced teachers use a construct of what they think that grade
55 should be based on their previous encounters with work of a similar standard. Wiliam argues that the teachers'
56 understanding of the construct is honed by considering and discussing borderline cases. He maintains that groups
57 of markers should meet for discussion to form a community of interpreters.

58 The pupils also need to be involved in this community. For this to be successful teachers must not only
59 understand the quality themselves but also communicate this to their pupils (Sadler, 1989). Contrast this with
60 what teachers were expected to do to grade pupils using level descriptors when assessing writing; a level 4 writer
61 was expected to show evidence of ? The correct use of complex sentences to extend meaning. ? The well-chosen
62 use of adverbial phrases and ? Consistent use of pronouns and tenses.

63 If all criteria are evident in the writing the teacher offers feedback intended to fill the gap between levels 4 and
64 5 for example, 'to use a mixture of simple and complex sentences by making use of a variety of connectives.' When
65 these levels were abolished in 2014 the move nationally from a single assessment system (levels) to a more flexible,
66 school-determined approach whilst providing new opportunities also created uncertainty in schools as to what
67 to replace them with. Black (1995) had written that most of the investment in assessment whether in practical
68 operations or in research has been devoted to certification and accountability to the neglect of the formative.
69 This was because governments, taxpayers and parents want to know how the education system is performing and
70 the results of assessment are also used as market forces to aid London Journal of Research in Humanities and
71 Social Sciences parental choice and promote competition between schools (Murphy, 1999). Central government
72 had been less willing to invest in teacher training in formative assessment or the funding of qualitative research
73 for this concept. This may have been because the process was found to be costly and time-consuming. People
74 who control change are likened to 'gatekeepers' ??Wignall, 1998, 311). It is suggested that gatekeepers espousing
75 a blind belief in the scientific validity and reliability of assessment data per se exist at all levels in the education
76 service and may be blocking understanding of the value of formative assessment in schools.

77 Those who adhere to a systems rationalist view of assessment accept an ordered and predictable reality which
78 can be objectively studied and systematically improved (Fullan, 1991). Systems-rationalist scholars explore a
79 world they view in terms of cause and effect, a world they contend is shaped by factors they can identify,
80 manipulate, and control. Systems-rationalists presume that a desired state can be objectively identified and
81 described, and that some state of (near) perfection can be reached through logic and rationality. In their view
82 researchers should and do remain objective and unbiased, they stand apart from the reality they investigate.
83 They also claim to investigate that reality, to reconstruct it and by so doing identify causal links and develop
84 universally applicable laws. As Greenfield explains of systems-rationalism according to this perspective Facts
85 stand separate and independent from theories about facts?it is possible to explain facts by theories and thereby
86 gain control of them ??1991b, 94).

87 Thus systems -rationalists tend to work with clearly defined problems and to offer specific and prescriptive
88 solutions to those problems. As gatekeepers' successive governments have biased the system, they control by
89 perpetuating a systems-rationalist view of assessment ??Wignall, 1998, 311).

90 A different approach to assessment inquiry and one which the author believes has possibility in moving
91 inspections forward to doing something with schools rather than to them is described by the phrase subjectivist-
92 interpretivist ??Carnahan, 1995). This is a perspective that acknowledges the world as constructed reality, in
93 other words a product of human action and interaction and of the meanings that social actors attach to their
94 experiences (Van Manen, 1992). For Subjectivist-interpretivists

95 The social world (is) not?.a world of cause and effects but a world of meanings that must constantly be
96 negotiated and renegotiated ??Donmoyer, 1995, 5). From this perspective then reality is value-laden rather than
97 factual ??Greenfield, 1993d, 181). Greenfield points out, although facts and values are conceptually distinct
98 those who research assessment encounter.

99 A world in which facts and values are inevitably and intimately intertwined ??Greenfield, 1993d, 181).

100 According to this line of reasoning the selection process through which humans choose to focus on particular
101 facts and discount others, the interpretations that people place on their self-selected facts and the meaning they
102 construct around these facts preclude the possibility of so-called scientific objectivity in assessment research.
103 These ideas are more in line with attempts to develop a constructivist approach to assessment. ??Wood, 1986,
104 13).

105 Subjectivist-interpretivist theorists contend that real-life situations are not clearly defined they are part of
106 human experience that is characterized by ambiguity, uncertainty, paradox, and dilemma. They maintain that

107 individuals may experience specific events quite differently at any one time and the same individuals could
108 attribute different meanings from one time to another. From this perspective school organizations are human
109 inventions, they are simply manifestations of mind and will ??Greenfield, 1993b, 92). It is true that schools
110 rarely offer real life situations they expose pupils to problems with already defined solutions for which the teacher
111 as the gatekeeper ??Wignall, 1998, 311), in his/her classroom holds London Journal of Research in Humanities
112 and Social Sciences the key. It is this idiosyncratic aspect of schooling which makes it even more important for
113 the researcher to study the context within which assessment and learning takes place.

114 Thus, in choosing to explore the social world of the school subjectivist-interpretivist theorists adopt methods
115 and approaches intended to encompass both the complexities of the human condition and the values that underlie
116 human actions, whilst trying to capture the multiple meanings that individuals attach to their experiences. From
117 this perspective then assessment research will seldom lead directly to exemplary solutions of human problems,
118 subjectivist-interpretivist research and theory can, however, illuminate what individuals do and why they do it
119 (Greenfield, 1993e).

120 There is a place for both set of values as they serve different purposes but anyone seeking to understand
121 formative as opposed to summative assessment need to promote a social constructivist view of the learner rather
122 than a developmental behaviourist one ??Piaget). Vygotsky (1987) and Bruner (1986) are key figures in this
123 field. They both regarded shared acts of language as the key for unlocking other's minds to the child.

124 After years of being required to respond to the expectations of a national curriculum, a testing culture as well
125 as examination criteria it would be naive to expect teachers to change their practice radically when so much is at
126 stake for their schools but by 2003 after the publication of the Black and Wiliam review of formative assessment
127 research ??Black and Wiliam, 1998a) this suddenly was what the government of the day expected to happen
128 even though the reported research was based on experimental settings and not on real classrooms. The finding
129 which caught government ministers' attention was that involving lower achieving pupils in formative assessment
130 led to improved grades.

131 Influenced by the above finding it was becoming apparent that OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education)
132 was seeking to redress the balance between the technical and social aspects of assessment with the publication
133 of 'Good Assessment in Secondary Schools' ??Tomlinson, 2001 p7) and a countrywide initiative was in place to
134 promote the value of formative assessment for both pupils' learning and teacher planning. What I was observing
135 in inspections, however, was very varied indicating a need for more teacher training in this field. I wrote, at the
136 time, to David Bell Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools expressing my concerns over variations in uptake
137 as seen when inspecting different schools.

138 In his reply he agreed that my findings were instructive and added A great deal depends, as you say, on the
139 way senior managers accept and pursue ideas and encourage staff to work through the implications for their
140 practice, not just individually but in departments and teams ??Bell, 2003).

141 As I considered how as an inspector/researcher I could be effective by reducing tensions and bridging the gap
142 which often appears when giving feedback on practice to teachers. I began by thinking of the pupils' figured world
143 from my own perspective, of how teachers had taught me as well as pertinent experiences which have influenced
144 my sociocultural approach to pedagogy and pupils' learning.

145 2 II. MY FIGURED WORLD

146 The 'figured world of the pupil (in the classroom) is quite different from that of her/his teacher because of the
147 wide gap in knowledge and understanding brought about because of experience of the subjects being studied.
148 The pupil's real-world experiences affect learning but are rarely recognised in the school context. In the 'figured
149 world' of the teacher there is a significant choice to be made between holding power over (Kreisberg, 1992, 175)
150 the pupil by exercising tight control over action and speech and sharing power more equally by involving pupils
151 more fully in the decision-making process. The teacher is the gatekeeper ??Wignall, 1998, 311) From my research
152 I recognise that innovative formative assessment is a key for unlocking the gate so that teachers can more equally
153 share power in the classroom, but for this to happen teachers need to change role for example from delivery
154 person to coach or scaffolder to allow pupils to move from in attendance to absorbent recipient or metacognitive
155 reflector (Burke, 2011).

156 As I observe current practice, I see similarities to what I experienced as a pupil. In 1949 my mother put
157 pressure on the nun who taught me to enter me for grammar school entrance tests. Subsequently I was taught
158 to the tests which I would need to pass to gain admittance. I recall practising nightly using old copies of tests
159 as well as being primed in good examination technique by my teacher. I passed and my parents were delighted
160 because they saw this form of education as opening wider opportunities for future employment. As no Catholic
161 Grammar Schools were within reasonable traveling distance permission was given by the church for me to study
162 at the mixed non-Catholic grammar school in the village. Within weeks of entering the very foundations of my
163 world were shattered firstly because for the first time I was expected to think for myself and express opinions, but
164 the more long-term effect was that I started to question the validity of the selection process I had been judged
165 by and much later the restrictive religious beliefs I had been born into.

166 During the first term my maths master whilst looking at my workbook remarked 'oh you were the one who
167 nearly did not pass your maths paper because your number fours resembled sevens. If I had not noted a pattern
168 in the papers submitted from your school, I would have failed you.'

5 STARTLED I REPLIED, IS THAT POSSIBLE?

169 This was my first experience that assessment has a social dimension rather than being a scientific process.
170 The power my primary teacher had held over me also had a negative effect on my confidence in my own ability
171 to express opinions and take risks particularly in Physical Education. Her voice in my head reminding me 'Girls
172 need to be careful not to hurt themselves!' Looking back through my termly report cards it took three years at
173 this school before I began to gain confidence and show my potential, but I never again formed figured fours as
174 my primary teacher had taught me. I also never told my parents how my education might have been different
175 because of something outside my control.

176 An example of how exam requirements can limit teacher practice and pupils' motivation to learn is considered
177 next. One of the subjects I enjoyed learning about was history despite how it was taught. The master started
178 each lesson by filling six blackboards with facts before he spoke to the class; our task as pupils was to scribble
179 these down in our jotters before he rubbed them off the board. The rest of the lesson he elaborated on what he
180 had shared in writing but offered no opportunities for discussion. Discipline was tightly controlled with the board
181 rubber thrown strategically to prevent in-attention. There is nothing wrong with direct teaching, but it should
182 not be used exclusively. Of all the pupils in my year only four of us made it to study the subject for A level. Here
183 our experiences were different. The same teacher shared first hand documents, encouraged discussion and on one
184 occasion admitted that for GCE (General Certificate in Education) he had to deliver facts and figures to cover
185 the curriculum and to fulfil the criteria expected by the exam board but for A level he could really share his love
186 of the subject with interested students who really wanted to learn. I was three years into my grammar school
187 education when I did something out of character for me, I stopped behind to ask this teacher a question after
188 the lesson was over. He had been explaining how Jews and Roman Catholics were not allowed to be members
189 of parliament and from what else he had told us this left me puzzled. I waited, frightened, until the master
190 acknowledged my presence.

191 **3 Please sir you told us that Jews and Roman Catholics could 192 not be Members of Parliament but if that were the case how 193 could Disraeli become Prime Minister?**

194 For the first time I saw this master laugh before he said.

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197 Oh, my dear he gave up being a Jew.

198 **5 Startled I replied, Is that possible?**

199 Of course, he said, we all have free will.

200 Researchers talk about the light bulb moment when learners understand a concept (Piaget, 1972) and how
201 dialogue helps unlock other minds for the learner ??Bruner,1986). That was such a moment for me and one
202 which transformed my subsequent approach to life. Looking back as a researcher myself, I regret that that
203 teacher was so constrained by the examination syllabus he was preparing us for that he gave us the impression
204 that he regarded us as empty vessels to be filled with knowledge (Piaget, 1972) not fellow travellers learning
205 from the decisions made by our forebears.

206 I recognise that my experiences as a pupil influenced my practice as a teacher, researcher, and inspector. In
207 primary school I was controlled by the cane, in grammar school I was freed from this constraint and gradually
208 gained in confidence. I determined as a teacher never to hit a child, and I never did. Going into a teacher training
209 college rather than a university department I learned more about child development than theories of learning.
210 Moving among students from different 'figured backgrounds' to my own I recognised that school organisations
211 affect outcomes (Greenfield 1993). The head of the mixed grammar school I attended was a scientist and the
212 focus there was more on science and maths than the arts. This was in sharp contrast to a fellow student's
213 experience. Her girls' grammar school head was a Quaker and her beliefs in equal opportunities meant that all
214 subjects were valued with alumni for example going onto to be well known actors, engineers etc. whereas the
215 choice in my school was more limited, either university, teacher training or a local job. The headteacher's career
216 advice to my parents 'don't encourage art she'll never make a living from it.' Fortunately, my mother did not
217 heed the warning and for 20 years I taught secondary art then inspected it alongside other subjects for a further
218 11 years.

219 As written earlier, in this article, in teacher training college I learned a lot about the history of education and
220 child development but less about theory. An early experience, whilst on school practice, shaped my subsequent
221 approach to teaching and learning and I later understood it as changing my role to accommodate what Vygotsky
222 identified as the student's 'zone of proximal development' or ZPD ??Vygotsky,1987). On this occasion my lesson
223 plan was not working as I faced a very disruptive group of 16-year-old boys in an art lesson. I knew the art
224 teacher was listening in her stockroom and I had been told by college tutors to stick to my plan. I decided to
225 break the rules. I sat down with the group and asked them what they wanted to learn. They told me they were

interested in cars and motor bikes. I admitted that they knew more about them than I did but if they liked I might be able to help with perspective, scale, or ellipses, they turned from 'resistance fighters to metacognitive reflectors before my eyes. After the lesson I expected criticism from the teacher, but her words gave me hope, 'I knew at that moment when you acted on instinct to turn the lesson around that you would become a good art teacher.' I did not know about 'roles by metaphor' when I started teaching but I soon recognised how different pupils were in their approach to learning. I coined my own phrase for this my 'back door children.' If I could not engage with them by the 'front door' with methods that usually sparked interest, I tried to get their attention by what I termed the side or back door. Usually this involved a conversation with said individual about what interested them and then pitching the next step just ahead of what I later recognised as his/her proximal zone of development. These pupils were the most difficult to teach but as their teacher when I really engaged with them, I felt satisfaction that I might have enriched their lives if not now but at some point, in their future by opening their eyes to creativity in an often-mundane working existence. Whilst my teacher colleagues often remarked 'you have it easy teaching art, they all want to do it.' I knew they did not all want to draw or paint and 'learned helplessness' was very evident even then (Dweck, London Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Sciences 1986) as they sheltered behind their fears and found the solution in ' If I don't try, I can't fail'.

As a teacher in my third year of practice, I had my first taste of inspection. It was something done to me and colleagues with little opportunity for dialogue ?? Bruner,1986). One part-time English colleague recalls how she was criticized for reading King Solomon's Mines with her all-girl class and how she should have chosen something more gender specific. In fact, the English department were so short of class texts that this was all that was left when she went to choose her readers. She also admitted that the girls really enjoyed the book as being so removed from their lives on an inner-city council estate but there was no opportunity to explain either of these scenarios to the inspector.

By sharing examples from my 'figured world,' I hope the reader understands how complex the teaching learning contract is with so many figured worlds involved coming together in the classroom. My teacher training college helped me to understand child development, but it was when I studied with the Open University, I recognised the importance of theory for pedagogy. Eleven years in the inspection service widened my experience but also made me aware how different school organisations can be as they serve different communities. I understood that a one size inspection based on data does not fit all needs.

6 III. ROLES BY METAPHOR

Metaphors are useful tools for encapsulating complex ideas. The significance of the role is that it stands for an important determinant that can be changed, indeed change in role may be central to an innovation. When pupils learn to take responsibility for their own self-assessment for example, and begin to direct their efforts towards learning goals, they strive to increase their competency, to understand and master something new rather than performance goals ??Dweck, 1989, 88-89) where they strive to either document or gain favourable judgements of their competency (externally driven) they also begin to move from absorbent recipient to constructive recipient. Innovative formative assessment, however, can only be fruitful if it encourages the teacher to change role for example from delivery person to coach or scaffolder. By explanation, the roles Black and Wiliam proposed are.

Teacher Roles: Prison warden, delivery person. scaffolder, coach, group animator, orchestral conductor
Individual Pupil roles:-in attendance, absorbent recipient, beauty contestant.

Pupil groups:-terrorists, resistance fighters, beauty contestants, relay team, project team.

7 Subjects:-

Tablets of stone, skills contexts, disciplines of knowledge, tools for capability.

Thinking back to the incident in the art lesson reported, earlier in the article, that group of boys changed from 'resistance fighters' to a project team when I realised that I needed to change role and stop delivering a previously prepared lesson and involve those boys more in the learning process.

Roles by metaphor might also I thought be a useful tool during inspections when providing feedback to teachers following lesson observation because it has the potential to be nonthreatening.

I began by piloting this model as part of my normal inspection practice. I learned more about each teacher's figured worlds as a result than I could have known from statistical sources or classroom observation. In one school I had noted missed opportunities for group work which might have allowed for greater involvement by pupils in the decision-making process allowing opportunities for teachers to stand back and observe students' viewpoints. Dropping my 'judge' role and encouraging dialogue allowed the teacher to move from 'absorbent recipient' to deliverer of useful information as she explained that in that area of London postcode gangs controlled the streets and would also use group work in lessons to recruit, bully and coerce other students. Here her change in role allowed me a glimpse into the figured worlds of these teachers and students which I would not have had otherwise.

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283 As an inspector, when I moved from my role as judge to scaffolder, I gave the teachers space to reflect on practice
284 in a non-threatening environment as well as offer me feedback on reasons for that practice. One example of
285 how effective this change proved must suffice. I had asked, why this teacher's pedagogy was so different in his
286 practical design and technology lessons to that seen in theory lessons and why the roles he adopted made such a
287 difference to his students' engagement in and motivation to learn in the two aspects of the subject? They were
288 engaged and productive in the practical work but merely going through the motions in theory lessons. His reply
289 was illuminating; -I am more confident in teaching practical than I am in imparting theory. I had not realised
290 what an effect my own attitudes were having on the students' minds.

291 Dialogue is important and this reciprocal feedback was much more effective in promoting meaningful change
292 in pedagogy following inspector visits to lessons.

293 After piloting roles by metaphor in inspections I recognised that they had the possibility of helping to relieve
294 tensions between teachers and inspectors. As a change agent (Fullan,1991) I also hoped they might help to
295 redress the balance between the technical and social side of assessment in the minds of the inspectors with whom
296 I worked.

297 Following changes at government level at this time schools were becoming more involved in the inspection
298 process even agreeing a special focus by inspectors for example on one occasion we looked at the underachievement
299 of boys. I took my opportunity to introduce the concept of roles by metaphor to one lead inspector and his team
300 when the special focus for the sixth form was: -

301 ? How much independence do teachers give learners? ? Should independence be planned for as a phased process
302 throughout schooling? I was given permission and a team of fifteen specialist inspectors collected information
303 using roles by metaphor alongside their normal form filling when inspecting a sixth form.

304 It is not surprising that inspectors were unsure of using this model at first with one asking, 'what has this got
305 to do with assessment'? Soon however, roles by metaphor started to enter the team's vocabulary with terms like
306 plate spinners being coined to describe themselves as coping with so many tasks at once. One colleague reported
307 that the senior common room was buzzing with good humour as the head of sixth form shared the inspectors'
308 observations and commented that the team had identified strong areas where teacher roles maximise opportunities
309 for student independent learning as well as areas where they had work to do. When the headteacher saw the
310 analysis, he started to speculate about the previous key stages. He recognised that insufficient consideration may
311 have been given in the school to gradually implementing strategies to develop independence from teachers as
312 pupils progressed through the school.

313 A lot has happened since I stopped inspecting in 2004 with the abolition of National Curriculum levels in
314 2014 and schools expected to be more flexible on how teachers plan and assess learning. But once prescriptive
315 practices are removed there is often a need for training before schools, departments and teachers adapt to the
316 new system. Clair Hodgson's article Assessment: Developing your own approach (2017) offers good advice to
317 those administering or working in schools as to what might need to be in place before assessment as a social
318 process is fully effective throughout a school. Her investigation centred on Key Stage 3.

319 **9 IV. CONCLUSION**

320 Having worked this model alongside the normal inspection processes I recognise that roles by metaphor have the
321 potential to help break down barriers between the figured worlds of those who inspect as well as those inspected
322 by making feedback as something 'done with the teachers rather than done to them'. My colleagues and I found
323 the metaphors were regarded with humour which softened the feedback process and made London Journal of
324 Research in Humanities and Social Sciences teachers more willing to be open to dialogue about their practice.
325 At the same time, the inspector often learned contributing factors which helped clarify the context in which
326 observations had taken place. I believe the change of emphasis regarding assessment in this sixth form influenced
327 the final report which was shared in the public domain. The assessment sections start Students are active in
328 assessing their own learning, as more traditional approaches to assessment are gradually being replaced. Under
329 the visionary leadership of the head of sixth form, assessment is now more linked to active teaching and learning
330 styles.

331 Whilst one sentence stands out in the teaching and learning section as a very hopeful sign that quality in
332 learning is valued. An almost observable feature of this effective learning is that students are feeling for the
333 knowledge and skills they acquire; through this knowledge and skills become a part of them. Teaching that
334 evokes such a response is rare daily yet was seen several times during inspection. It features active learning, good
335 questioning and well-planned structured lessons from which students learn well.

336 Unfortunately, inspections in England have now changed to a light touch investigation by one or two inspectors
337 with even more emphasis on the technical side of assessment as recorded in statistical data and opportunities
338 such as that described above are no longer possible. This is another example of a decision made by government
339 ministers controlled by economic considerations or ideological beliefs with little consideration as to what might
340 consequently be lost. The death of a headteacher following a critical report on the school she managed is a timely
341 reminder of what is at stake.

342 There is only room here to share some of the observations made by these sixth form inspectors (Appendices A
343 and B), but I hope the reader will understand how they could form the basis for a meaningful discussion between
344 those involved and as such might lead to changes in or reinforcement of practice.

345 Why concentrate on the sixth form to evaluate this model? This was just a trial to judge the reactions of
346 those involved, and time factors and the fact that I was asking more of inspectors in their already busy agendas
347 influenced this decision. It is admitted that to really answer the questions raised about progression in independent
348 learning a much more thorough investigation would need to be undertaken. This one did open a dialogue between
349 inspectors and teachers focused on their own subject disciplines, it also raised questions in the headteacher's mind
350 about the previous key stage. The head of sixth form also had a clearer idea where pedagogy might need further
351 training and where in the school the expertise might exist to deliver it effectively.

352 Regarding the testing culture in the United Kingdom the results of a new survey by campaign group MORE
353 Than a Score (MTAs) show that few taking part believe in the value of SATs (standard assessment tests) (2023).
354 Just 17 percent of parents believed good SATs results are the best indicator of whether the primary child has
355 received a good education. Only 3% of heads and senior teachers shared this view. Leaders selected love of
356 learning (63%), independent thinking (56%), and a good grasp of a range of subjects as the best indicators of
357 high education standards.

358 Teachers also are raising their voices against OFSTED. On 23 rd March 2023, a group of teachers joined the
359 NEU deputy general secretary to deliver a petition to the Department for Education calling for OFSTED to
360 be replaced by a 'new accountability system that is supportive, effective and fair (NEU, 2023, 21'. Rather than
361 abandon OFSTED investigations such as those described in this article have the potential to bring about a better
362 balance in the English accountability system. After a lifetime in education, I retain an all-consuming interest in
363 how teachers use their subject knowledge to facilitate their pupils' learning. I hope through my writing to raise
364 awareness of issues and ways forward that will ensure that teachers' practice will reflect the needs of a child's
365 present and his/her future rather than being constrained by an adults' past and that London Journal of Research
366 in Humanities and Social Sciences those judging schools will move from delivery person to that of critical friend.
367 It may be interesting at this point to reflect on the roles these sixth form teachers used to describe inspectors
368 they had met during their careers; silent spectre, inquisitor, judge, absorbent recipient, detective, sleeping beauty,
369 reporter, critical friend.

370 We are living in a fast-changing society where recent technologies expand the boundaries of communication
371 and where epidemics like Covid can traverse continents ,with mental health issues, knife crime, gang culture etc
372 also impacting on our pupils' lives. It is time that assessment as a social process is given equal prominence in
373 schools and in inspections and teachers' and pupils' voices are listened to in a non threatening environment before
374 the significant minority of disenchanted teachers and young people swells and society pays the price for schools
375 not understanding the figured real world both teachers and young people inhabit outside the classroom.

376 Physics Teacher is acting as mediator between subject and students, all aware of target grades and standard
377 aimed for.

378 Music Uses students' own knowledge, gets them to compare their use of a new Keyboard with functions of
379 other digital equipment.

380 Sociology Teacher helps students identify goals prior to exam, moves to involve them in understanding how
381 they could improve by two grades.

382 Biology Teacher reviews previous work prior to supervising students preparing for a field work residential,
383 investigative approach.

384 **10 London**



Figure 1:



Figure 2:

¹ Seeking to Establish a Better Balance Between the Technical and Social Aspects of Assessment Practices in the English Inspection System as Well as Bridging the Gap between the' Figured Worlds' of Inspectors and Teachers So That Each Can Become Part of a More Effective Community of Evaluation Practice

² 31 © 2023 Great] Britain Journals Press || Volume 23 Issue 10 ?"? Compilation 1.0 Seeking to Establish a Better Balance Between the Technical and Social Aspects of Assessment Practices in the English Inspection System as Well as Bridging the Gap between the' Figured Worlds' of Inspectors and Teachers So That Each Can Become Part of a More Effective Community of Evaluation Practice

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⁴ 37 © 2023 Great] Britain Journals Press

386 .1 Biology Group animator

387 .2 APPENDIX B

388 Inspector's comments about pedagogy changes on lesson effectiveness regarding students' learning RE Teacher
389 uses knowledge to move learning forward by asking pertinent questions, students encouraged to do own research
390 and form own opinions.

391 Geography Teacher is moving from a focus on content delivery to using a range of teaching approaches,
392 particularly collaborative work for a presentation on Italy.

393 Art and design students gain from teacher's expertise as artist, then work independently except in emergencies
394 when advice is sought.

395 Psychology Offering conceptual arguments then opportunities for reflection and debate, teacher acts as
396 mediator between subject and students.

397 ICT Teacher is enhancing students' capacity to interact directly with technology.

398 Engineering Gap in knowledge not being filled by teacher's own craft experience (new to teaching) Students
399 need a lot of scaffolding after absence.

400 .3 Leisure and Tourism Solid good old-fashioned question and answer

401 Maths Start of a new topic teacher acting as mediator between subject and students.

402 English Teacher introduces focus then stands back and gets students to analyse, evaluate, interpret, and draw
403 comparisons.

404 Theatre Studies Once grouping for scene is established students encouraged to think laterally, to produce
405 suggestions for portraying comic elements through rhythm, timing, and setting.

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