

Stephen Dobson, *Assessment for learning in Norway – opportunities for connoisseurship and language games in the globally important work of Gordon Stobart?*

This article examines the influence of Gordon Stobart, a pivotal figure in the assessment for learning movement that originated in the UK and became globally significant, with particular focus on his work in Norway. The author, a former doctoral student of Stobart's, argues that he embodies the figure of an "assessment connoisseur", able to communicate complex ideas through storytelling, humour, and careful attention to context and audience. Drawing on Wittgenstein, the article introduces the concept of "language games of assessment" to describe the different registers – popular, technical, disciplinary – through which Stobart adapts his message for teachers, academics, and civil servants.

The paper is structured around three roles in which Stobart operates as a connoisseur: the teacher, illustrated through the author's personal experience as his doctoral student at the Institute of Education in London; the researcher, through analysis of his book *Testing Times* and his engagement with Norwegian academics via the NELVU assessment network; and the policy adviser, in relation to his involvement in the Norwegian national assessment for learning policy (2010-2018) led by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training. The article highlights how Norway's culture of equality (*Janteloven*) resonated with Stobart's self-effacing and non-hierarchical approach, distinguishing him from other prominent figures in the movement, such as Dylan Wiliam. Direct testimonies from Norwegian civil servants who collaborated with him are also presented, supporting the paper's central

claim: Stobart's ability to "touch" diverse audiences through practical experience, theoretical scholarship, and cultural sensitivity, contributing lastingly to the international spread of formative assessment.

Keywords: assessment for learning; connoisseurship; language games; Gordon Stobart; Norway's culture of equality.

Valeria Damiani, Brian Shee, Gabriella Agrusti, Greg Larkin, *A micro-credential on formative assessment for pre- and in-service teachers: evidence from an Italian trial*

Micro-credentials are increasingly recognised as flexible instruments for lifelong learning, yet their pedagogical design and educational effectiveness remain underexplored. This paper presents the development and initial evaluation of an Italian micro-credential on formative feedback, created within the Erasmus+ *Learning to Learn through Micro-Credentials* (L2L Microcred ref. 2024-1-NO01-KA220-ADU-000256871) project. Grounded in a learner-centred pedagogical toolbox co-developed across four countries, the blended-learning micro-credential was designed to strengthen teachers' assessment literacy by focusing on feedback as a communicative practice. The study involved 72 pre-service and in-service primary teachers who completed reflective journals throughout the course. A thematic analysis of 288 reflections identified a progressive shift in participants' understanding of feedback, from a corrective and summative practice towards a relational, formative, and learning-oriented process. Participants demonstrated increased awareness of the emotional, motivational, and self-regulatory functions of feedback, as well as its role in informing instructional decision-making. The findings suggest that structured reflection on authentic classroom experiences and biographical learning can effectively foster teachers' professional awareness of assessment. The study highlights the potential of well-designed micro-credentials to support meaningful professional development in teacher education while providing an empirically grounded model for designing learner-centred, transferable micro-credentials.

Keywords: micro-credential; formative assessment; feedback; primary pre-service teachers; primary in-service teachers.

Ira Vannini, *Which university, Which school? Continuing the debate following the book by Cappa and Gavosto (2025)*

This article offers a critical reflection on the prospects for Italian universities, drawing on the book *Università sotto esame* by Cappa and Gavosto

(2025), and broadening its interpretative framework through a pedagogical and politico-institutional analysis. After highlighting some of the system's structural weaknesses – persistent underfunding, the prevalence of neoliberal and efficiency-driven approaches, demographic decline and the rapid expansion of online universities – the paper argues that these phenomena cannot be addressed separately or exclusively within the confines of higher education. The argument proposes reframing the debate within a systemic perspective that takes the development of the country's intellectual capital and the democratic function of education as its guiding principles. Through engagement with pedagogical literature, studies on reflective and decision-making processes, and data from national and international sources, the paper discusses the need to counter short-term decision-making models and to promote planning grounded in reflection, public accountability and the quality of education. From this perspective, the strengthening of universities is seen as inseparable from a reform of the entire education system, from pre-school to adult education, with particular attention to secondary education and initial teacher training. The article concludes by proposing a renewed alliance between intellectuals who teach at universities and in schools, as a necessary condition for promoting equity, cultural development and the consolidation of democracy within the Italian education system.

Keywords: higher education; secondary education; education policy; decision-making processes; democratic education system.

Cristiano Corsini, Conny De Vincenzo, Beatrice Partouche, *Between objectivity, discretion and standardisation: A historical-critical analysis of ministerial rubrics for the oral examination in the Italian State exam*

This article examines assessment rubrics for the oral examination in the Italian upper secondary school final exam, focusing on the relationship between evaluative discretion, explicit criteria and standardisation. Drawing on a historical reconstruction of the exam from early local practices to the introduction of national grids, the study shows how oral assessment was long grounded in implicit criteria and broad judgements on students' maturity, personality and cultural orientation. Since 2020, ministerial grids have attempted to reduce local variability by organising the oral examination around indicators, levels, descriptors and scores. The article critically analyses this shift, discussing whether such rubrics actually improve validity, reliability and transparency. It argues that, while common rubrics can make criteria more visible, their effectiveness depends on the quality of indicators and descriptors. When descriptors remain generic or mainly translate qualitative

labels into scores, rubrics risk becoming a form of disguised grading rather than a tool for interpreting learning.

Keywords: oral assessment; assessment rubrics; State Exam; evaluative discretion; grading.

Aurora Ricci, Elena Luppi, Flavio Brescianini, *Promoting pedagogical innovation amidst the complexity of transitions: results of the quantitative phase of a Research-based Teacher Professional Development project at university*

Widening participation is reshaping higher education, making teaching innovation a strategic priority. Adopting a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design, this study reports the quantitative phase of a Research-based Teacher Professional Development project at the Department of Agricultural and Food Sciences, University of Bologna. Two online questionnaires were administered to 102 teachers and 318 students, addressing self-efficacy, engagement, motivation, collaboration, and employability. Teachers' satisfaction with student engagement was predicted by self-efficacy in engaging them and by teaching engagement, whereas active methods reflected their ability to foster metacognitive skills. Among students, engagement and extrinsic motivation predicted degree commitment; self-efficacy and collaborative behaviour predicted teamwork ability; and engagement, motivation, and employability predicted learning transfer. Findings inform formative, data-driven faculty development.

Keywords: Research-based teacher professional development; evaluation research; mixed methods research; teaching innovation; higher education.

Martina Cavassori, Davide Capperucci, Andrea Baroncelli, Enrica Ciucci, *Promoting future-oriented imaginative processes in pre-service teachers: Proposal of a self-report tool to foster self-awareness prior to starting training internships*

The main aim of the present study was to investigate the psychometric properties of a self-report questionnaire derived from the Professional Standards for Early Childhood and Primary Education (in Italian, *Standard professionali professionali primaria e infanzia – S3PI*; Bandini et al., 2019), a tool aimed at guiding and assessing progress during the internship in school contexts for students of the master's degree in primary education. A sample of 47 female students (mean age = 21.16 years, SD = 5.94 years) at the beginning of the training course, without previous internship or teaching experience, com-

piled the questionnaire imagining themselves in the role of future trainees. The two dimensions envisaged (“Values and Attitudes” and “Professional Community and Education”) showed good indices of reliability, and associations with measures of personal emotional self-efficacy and self-efficacy as a future emotional socializer were examined. The results were discussed emphasizing the importance of promoting self-reflective practices in future teachers even before the start of their first internship experience within the school contexts.

Keywords: teacher education; self-efficacy; social and emotional competences; self-assessment; self-awareness.