

# Deeper Than Reason: The Neglect of Practical and Productive Forms of Knowledge in Vocational Education in England

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## Abstract

This paper discusses the neglect of the assessment of practical and productive forms of knowledge in vocational and technical education in England. It highlights how practical and productive forms of knowledge have been pushed to the margins of vocational education, displaced by preoccupations with declarative knowledge framed, taught and assessed in terms of recall of cognitive concepts and the regurgitation of factual information.

It reports the findings of a participatory-research project conducted in collaboration with six tutors of vocational and technical education working in FE colleges and Industry Training Providers in England. It brings to light problematic levels of incoherence between current assessment regimes (described by the vocational tutors who contributed to this study as being “one dimensional”) and disconnections in assessment theory and practice in relation to the varied forms of knowledge which are required to be developed and assessed in vocational and workplace learning contexts.

It identifies how a lack of opportunities for employers and FE college and other vocational tutors to make vocational curricula more coherent is inhibiting the development of joint curriculum planning, problem and project-based learning and multimodal assessment in vocational education and workplace learning contexts.

Data from this study suggest that Awarding Bodies (ABs), other stakeholders and gatekeepers of standards of quality and assessment in vocational and technical education need to work more closely with sector practitioners in developing more flexible curriculum design and assessment regimes capable of supporting the assessment of vocational and technical education technical in more coherent, authentic and multimodal ways.

**Keywords:** Vocational and Education, Forms of Knowledge, Joint Curriculum Planning, Problem and Project-based Learning, Multimodal Assessment