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Past, Present, and Future of Assessment in Schools: A Thematic Narrative Analysis

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Abstract

As a diverse group of educationalists, we worry about the role of assessment in K-12 schools and current neoliberal education policies. In this paper, we aim to highlight some of the unintended or often overlooked consequences of these policies by taking an arts-based approach to our research. We interviewed various educational stakeholders about their past and present experiences with assessment, as well as their imagined futures. By creating poetic representations to present the results, we aim to shed a new light on the otherwise familiar contexts of assessment in the schools. Many are afraid of a future where neoliberal policies continue to determine the nature and role of assessment in schools, but want to believe that things will get better.

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A Thematic Narrative Analysis

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As a diverse group of educationalists, we worry about the role of assessment in K-12 schools and current neoliberal education policies. In this paper, we aim to highlight some of the unintended or often overlooked consequences of these policies by taking an arts-based approach to our research. We interviewed various educational stakeholders about their past and present experiences with assessment, as well as their imagined futures. By creating poetic representations to present the results, we aim to shed a new light on the otherwise familiar contexts of assessment in the schools. Many are afraid of a future where neoliberal policies continue to determine the nature and role of assessment in schools, but want to believe that things will get better. Keywords: Assessment, Narrative, Qualitative Research.

We are a group of educationalists in Florida who worry about the current role and politics of assessment in the schools. Some of us worry that a focus on assessment narrows the curriculum, producing students who are technically good at schooling, but less adept at thinking outside received wisdom. Others of us worry about the governmentality of assessments and the kinds of student-subjects assessment delineates -- the *gifted*, *disabled*, and *mediocre* students. We struggle with the implications of government-mandated testing on the practice of teaching, concerned that the artistic elements of teachers' craft, the aspects of teaching that keep students connected and engaged in classrooms, are being cast aside in favor of mechanistic delivery. Those of us in measurement and research are concerned about our complicity in the production of technically savvy assessment specialists whose statistical skill is used to develop increasingly sophisticated value-added models to evaluate teacher quality. At the same time we recognize that assessment motivates, provides valuable academic information, and aligns with pragmatic material economic and social realities in western society.

The purpose of our research was to gather educational stakeholders' stories of assessment, including their worries and hopes for the future of assessment in K-12 education. We analyzed these stories for their commonalities and divergences through an arts-based approach to inform an ongoing dialogue about the role and purpose of assessment in schools. Our research is guided by the following questions:

1. What are educational stakeholders' understandings of assessment in schools?
2. What are educational stakeholders' experiences with assessment in schools?
3. What do educational stakeholders' accounts of assessment in schools suggest about the future of assessment?

Literature Review

Assessment can have as many definitions as people that you ask "what is assessment?" For the purposes of our study, we followed Stobart's (2008) multi-faceted definition of assessment in that it is a "value-laden social activity" that "does not objectively

measure what is already there, but rather creates and shapes what is measured" (p. 1). This definition of assessment also states that it has the power to undermine or encourage learning, leading to either constructive or destructive consequence. Although our study simply asked participants about the generic term "assessments," most discourse focused on high-stakes assessments. Johnson, Johnson, Farenga, and Ness (2008) make the distinction between "normal" and "high-stakes" assessments on their utility. They state that assessments qualify as high-stakes when "student performance is used to deny promotion to the next grade, withhold a high school diploma, label schools *failures*, determine if teachers and administrators keep their jobs, or decide if schools get more funding" (p. 2).

High-stakes testing originated in the late 1980s, born out of a neoliberal movement to address the perceived challenge to American corporations by foreign markets (Johnson, Johnson, Farenga, & Ness, 2008). In order to keep up internationally, schools had to "return to the basics, meet higher standards, and be held accountable" (p. 5). The language around "raising standards" has been one of the main catchphrases of the educational accountability movement, but there is a gap in the understanding of the term "standards" among educators and politicians (Jones, Jones, & Hargrove, 2003). Where educators envision a heightened system of teaching and learning where students are engaged in higher-level conceptualization, the political implications of *raising standards* tends to imply a focus on basic skills (Jones, Jones, & Hargrove, 2003). The latter understanding has since been used to craft educational policies with the neoliberal intent to reform "school curriculum and pedagogy to focus on teaching students the skills and knowledge they need to be productive workers" (Hursh, 2008, p. 4).

These high-stakes testing and accountability systems have been shown to narrow curricula and limit teacher flexibility and creativity (Goertz & Duffy, 2003; McNeil, 2000). In many schools, tests are the driving force behind the curriculum and instruction as education has become mainly concerned with improving test scores (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). The assessments have also shifted the decisions about what knowledge is considered important away from the teachers and into to the hands of test developers (Jones, Jones, & Hargrove, 2003). In this way, the system of testing and accountability "not only defines what will be taught, but also defines the context of the knowledge" (p. 24).

The impact of assessments on students, parents, and the community is of upmost importance, and a primary reason that the researchers are interested in this field. Amrein and Berliner (2003) found that high-stakes assessments lowered students' motivation, and increased the number of students that decided to leave school early or earn an alternative degree. The pressure, stress, and anxiety associated with the culture of assessment has also been found to be harmful to children's health (Johnson, Johnson, Farenga, & Ness, 2008). Stobart (2008) describes a phenomenon of assessment that he calls "making up people" (p. 6). In this, people are socially defined by how they are assessed, labeled, and sorted, which in turn shapes their identities.

Assessments also affect the practice of teaching. Instructional time is more limited than ever, with teachers spending "much of their instructional time preparing their pupils, in one way or another, for tests" (Johnson & Johnson, 2006). While many current theories of teaching and learning advocate for a student-centered approach, testing proponents advocate for a teacher-centered approach, causing teachers to focus mainly on low-level knowledge and skills (Jones, Jones, & Hargrove, 2003). Teachers that disagree with this find it difficult, if not impossible, to utilize pedagogical approaches that are responsive to student needs and interests because that would require "either eliminating or reducing the significance of the standardized exams" (Hursh, 2008, p. 5). These consequences for teaching have caused many educators to leave the field entirely (Johnson, Johnson, Farenga, & Ness, 2008).

In our present study, we aimed to explore the past, current, and potential future contexts of assessment in the schools from the perspectives of those whose experiences and feelings about assessment are often ignored in a neoliberal context that privileges accounts of policy- and test-makers. For our research, we chose to focus on current and former teachers, and assessment specialists as they are people whose daily lives involve giving and interpreting assessments. The literature was sparse when it came to looking for the future of assessment. Some researchers described how they felt current policies would play out in the more immediate future (Ryan & Shepard, 2008), including in an idealized 51st state (Darling-Hammond, Wilhoit, & Pittenger, 2014), while Hursh (2008) promoted a general political shift away from neoliberalism. All three described the future or ideal assessment regimes from the perspectives of educational researchers, which we contrast with stories from a wider range of educational stakeholders. We also asked our participants to imagine not just the utopic future, but the dystopic future as well. This type of imagining in qualitative research serves as a warning, suggesting the ugly consequences of today's conditions, and highlights hope that personal and social changes may herald a better future (Baccolini & Moylan, 2003).

Process of Inquiry

> "Storytelling, to put the argument simply, is what we do with our research materials and what informants do with us." (Riessman, 1993, p. 1)

Methodologically, our study is a narrative arts-based inquiry. McNiff (2008) describes arts-based research as

> the systematic use of the artistic process, the actual making of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding and examining experience by both researchers and the people that they involve in their studies. (p. 29)

We used narrative as both a method and the phenomenon under study (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006; Riessman, 1993) as we asked participants to use the literary art form of storytelling to engage in discussions about the role of assessment in the K-12 classroom and, in turn, we wrote poetic representations of the data as the first part of our analysis.

Our larger research was conducted in and around several educational institutions in the Tampa Bay area of Florida, including K-12 school systems and a large public research university. Participants were recruited through our professional and personal networks and selected to encompass the diversity of educational assessment stakeholders. In this present study, we included four participants to put a spotlight on those educationalists that are in the assessment trenches every day:

1) Brian, a doctoral candidate in Special Education with a background in secondary education;
2) Chad, a high school History teacher;
3) Katie, an instructional assessment specialist; and
4) Ashley, a doctoral candidate in Special Education with a background in elementary education.

Each participant was interviewed once in a private location of their choosing. Interviews lasted anywhere from 30 minutes to one hour, and were tape recorded and transcribed. We followed a semi-structured interview format, and our interview guide

included questions such as "Tell me about an early experience you had with assessment," and "What do you think assessment will look like in 50 years?"

We chose narrative analysis for this study because of its ability to open up a deeper view of life in otherwise familiar contexts and speak to those experiences that might not be made public through the more traditional forms of analysis (Clough, 2002). We agree with Riessman (1993) when she states that "locating narratives of personal experience for analysis is not difficult. They are ubiquitous in everyday life" (p. 2). Many of the questions we asked in the interviews were not explicitly asking for stories, but we found that our participants tended to organize their thoughts around stories, specifically narratives of their past and present experiences with assessment.

This led us to organize our initial analysis around the different time periods expressed:

1) The Past;
2) The Present;
3) The Utopic Future;
4) The Dystopic Future.

To start, we carefully read and reread the interview transcripts independently, searching for each of the time periods mentioned. We then chunked these portions of the text into a separate Word document and examined them for their main ideas. We used these main ideas, with the participants' words, to create poetic representations for each participant. We then analyzed the poems for more general themes.

Given that the researcher is the primary analytical instrument in qualitative research (Lichtman, 2013), we feel the need to disclose our researcher subjectivities. Our research was conducted by a team of seven researchers from diverse fields in education, including measurement, research, special education, and educational leadership. The researchers comprised various and differing views on the role of assessment in education, and all were also interviewed for inclusion in the larger research study. For this study, the four interviews that were included were conducted and analyzed by the first and second authors. The analysis was then brought back to the larger group of researchers for feedback on the interpretations.

Analysis and Findings

"Poems are everywhere, but easy to miss." (Kingsolver, 2002, p.229)

"We bear the rhythms of poetry in our blood, constantly in motion with the heart's beating." (Leggo, 2008, p. 169)

Understanding that the "construction of any work always bears the mark of the person who created it" (Riessman, 1993), we choose to follow Glesne's (1997) guide for poetic representation by using exclusively the participants' own words in the poems with researcher interpretation in the selection and order of the words. Poetic representation was employed over other forms of writing because of its ability to make the experiences of others more accessible to the reader (Sparkes, 2002). Sparkes and Douglas (2007) suggest that these representations have the power to "create evocative and open-ended connections to the data for the researcher, reader, and listener," and can provide a "different and compelling lens" through which to understand the data and ourselves in "alternate and more complex ways" (p. 172). Madill (2008) contends that poetry helps condense meanings while allowing the reader to find their own meanings. We choose to individually represent the participants in their own

series of poems so each representation could introduce the reader to one of the participants in a more expanded way, allowing for a unique story to be told (Clarke et al., 2005).

After the representations were created, we examined the poems for emergent themes utilizing Riessman's (2008) model for thematic narrative analysis. In this form of analysis, the emphasis is on the content of what is said more than how it is said (Riessman, 2008). Our primary interest was to generate thematic categories across individuals and their experiences with assessment in the past, present, and alternate futures, and we did so through a careful reading of the poems and naming the underlying assumptions in each account (Riessman, 2008). During this process, we found three main themes emerge from the data:

1) Assessment is Emotional;
2) Assessment is Personal;
3) Things Will Get Better.

Assessment is Emotional

Brian

I'm six years old
Put in a different classroom, unknown
Gave us the test book, the last question read
Draw a picture of a man

What kind of man? A superhero?
Myself as a kid, or maybe my dad?

Well, a stick figure
A circle with a body and stick arms
Shoes and a hat!
Happy to be done, to go home and play

Weeks later, a meeting
Parents, teacher, psychologist, principal
Fine on math, reading looks good
But concerned about the picture

Not what they were looking for,
Didn't meet their expectations
How should I know?
Before I was satisfied with my man
But then I was humiliated

This theme encompasses our finding that assessment can bring about strong emotions in those involved in the process, whether as test-takers or test-givers. Sometimes these were positive emotions. When talking about her past experiences with assessment, Ashley remarked that she was looking forward to the test because it gave her the opportunity to prove herself intellectually. Because she knew she would do well, the test moved away from being a burden and instead became a mechanism to position herself among her peers.

But for most participants, the topic of assessments brought up memories of bad experiences and negative emotions. In the past, Brian told a story about an assessment he was

given when he was six years old. This assessment asked him to draw a man, but he explains that the question itself was very confusing for him because he was not sure what exactly it wanted him to do. Adding on to that already adverse experience was what happened after the assessment was graded.

> They made this big commotion about this stick man. And this has stuck with me for so many years, thinking about this and being humiliated by going into this meeting. And I think back, why was I humiliated? I was humiliated because I didn't meet everybody else's expectations for what was needed when I was perfectly satisfied with my man. It stuck with me.

This very early emotional experience made an impact on Brian and his views on assessment. When he talked about the present and alternate futures of assessment, he constantly referred back to the power of assessments to marginalize certain students because of their rigid expectations.

In the present, Chad gave a unique perspective on emotions and assessments by talking about his experiences with giving out standardized assessments as a teacher. His message was that assessments are boring, not so much for the students but for the proctors. He felt that students are fine taking a test because they at least have something to occupy their time, but

> when you have to give out an assessment, especially with the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Tests and you aren't allowed to do anything else but monitor for a very long time, and you just sit there and, that's really what, as a teacher now, assessments have gone to. Yeah, it's just boring. I mean, it's a necessity, but it's just tiring, boring, to sit there and do nothing.

Chad used boredom as a way of expressing his feelings about the role of teachers in assessments. He indicated that he does not feel teachers have an active role in assessing students anymore. The emotional impact of assessments can be seen on everyone involved in the process. Just the emotional anxiety associate with assessments has been linked to negative health effects (Johnson, Johnson, Farenga, & Ness, 2008).

Assessment is Personal

Brian

The stress is so overwhelming
You need a way to get rid of it, to overcome
A week later and I'm still carrying my stone
The assessment isn't over
The judging has just begun

We teach kids to be successful,
Successful *on* assessments
The society we've structured, we've created
Evaluation is a necessity
It's so overwhelming

Assessments have created classes of people
We tell ourselves we value individualism
But that's a lie
We're creating a bland, standardized world
Fearful, and resistant to change

Delving deeper from the last theme that assessment is emotional, we found that assessment is seen as a very personal experience. One potential cause of the emotional reactions is that assessments are used to classify people into various dichotomies, such as abled/disabled, academic/vocational, success/failure, and high achieving/low achieving. Ashley stated that tests are "segregating kids into the haves and haves nots," and Brian thought that "assessment has contributed, through this structure of extremes, to creating a class of people in society." Both of these participants share the same thought that assessments are going too far in their labeling of students to the point where these labels are reaching beyond the tests and are applied to the individual themselves. As Brian adds

um, you know tracking itself, tracking is when you identify, not skills and abilities, but deficits, and you classify a person's ableism, ability or disability, and you say "That kid can't learn this right now. That kid is not going to be able to do this, or achieve that goal, so instead of working towards that goal, let's work towards something else. That kid is different. That kid is dis-abled. That kid is not a part of the classroom. So, we have to do something different so that they achieve a different goal, a lesser goal." And so, it's not just the goal that becomes lesser, but the student that becomes less too.

The outcome of an assessment is no longer simply indicating that a student needs more help in math or reading, or that they should be challenged with more difficult course work, but is instead used to track and define students on a personal level. Stobart (2008) describes this as "making up people" (p. 6), as people are then defined by how they are assessed, labeled, and sorted.

Beyond the emotional consequences that have already been noted, this way of defining students by their scores is also used in more high-stakes situations that personally affect the students and their futures. Katie remarked that assessments are especially critical in certain times, like 3rd and 10th grades, because "it's a promotional criteria or a graduation criteria." Ashley recounts that

assessment was a huge deal. It was every little thing, the data, we gotta have the data, we gotta do this test, we gotta get this stuff together, they won't pass, you need to be doing this, that, and the other thing, so daily life revolved around testing. It's, you know, you're not making it, you know, on this one measure, essentially you are stuck.

Assessment is shown to be a paramount concern for teachers and students because of the high-stakes consequences attached to the scores. For students, this could be the difference between promotion or retention, the advanced track or the remedial track, or in extreme cases graduating or dropping out. Even now in some Florida school districts, teacher promotions and salaries are tied to student assessment scores, adding all the more stress to an already stressful job.

Assessments can also be dehumanizing to the test-takers. Students are transformed into "just paper-based data," as Katie put it. Ashley adds that "the FCAT tells me nothing

about my student. It's a multiple choice test, you know, it doesn't really tell me anything about my child." Implicit in these statements is the thought that students are more complex than just a series of single-shot test results, thereby necessitating a new, more dynamic and comprehensive form of assessment. This assessment will probably not be in a standardized format since Brian suggests that these standardized tests are forcing students into rigid boxes.

> We have these standardized assessments. We have a standard system and standardized expectations for people that we project internationally. And I worry that we're seeking this homogenous, bland world. We tell kids, we tell ourselves that every kid can learn. We tell ourselves, and we tell our families and kids who are students, that everybody is an individual, and that we value individualism, well now that's a lie. It's an out and out lie.

This standardization of students into dichotomous data that can, and are used for high-stakes decisions is something that all of our participants agreed needs to be reformed.

Things Will Get Better

Ashley

Tests would be given to truly monitor progress
To see how kids are doing
We stop standardizing children
Assessments are more relative
To the people taking them
They won't be so canned
It will be more learner-centered

Although one of the initial aims of our study was to have our participants imagine both a dystopic and utopic future of assessment in schools, we found that every participant seemed to believe that the past and current state of assessments was dismal at best, but that it would get better in the future. They all painted pictures of bleak classrooms with tedious and broken (but still necessary) assessments that sounded dystopic, but in actuality were about the past and present time periods. When posed with the question "What do you think assessments in schools will look like in 50 years?" the participants initially spoke about all of the changes that they hope will happen. This tended to revolve around aligning assessment utility with assessment language, so that when assessment initiatives state vague terms like "no child left behind," the assessments actually work to better inform student learning and progress. Katie imagined

> teachers walking around with iPads with immediate feedback as a student submits an answer and the teacher can instantaneously turn around and give supporting instruction for a child who is not performing or understanding the depth of the standard that is required at the grade level.

In her utopic world, assessments would be there to help students in real time, something that is important to her since there is a significant delay from when the current assessments are taken to when the results can be utilized. Ashley had similar sentiments when she stated that "tests would be given to truly monitor progress to see how kids are doing." She goes on to say that assessments "will be more relative to the people taking them. They won't be so

maybe canned, I don't know, and it won't be such a prevalence. It will be more learner-centered instead of gatekeeping." She is implying here that we need to move away from the way that assessments are currently being done, which is not relative or learner-centered, and is instead used to keep certain students out.

Brian's utopic vision was also implicitly critical of the way assessments are in the present time. He states that

> we just need to be more knowledgeable and skilled ourselves at identifying students' strengths outside of formal assessment, or at least formal written assessment. In the perfect world, I see students with disabilities in no special ed. classrooms. I see them taking the same assessments with accommodations and modifications.

He focused on the current marginalization of some students in regards to testing, tying back into the emotional and personal effects of assessment. Chad took almost an opposite view by proposing a variety of academic tracks to give students more options. Although he did not address the personal and emotional effects of labeling students, he stated that

> I just wish there were more tracks. Like, some of those that are ready for that and want to take those rigorous classes, some are going to be more mainstream, and some are going to go more technical. And so there are more options. Uh, that would be more of the ideal thing.

While the participants differed in the specifics of how they wanted assessment to change, they all couched their utopic visions in comparisons to what they dislike about assessment now. Most participants were able to come up with some dystopic visions for the future of assessment, but only after a follow-up question of "well, what about your worst case scenario?" These also tended to be less detailed and followed the lines of either keeping assessment the same as it is now or intensifying the negative aspects of the current state of assessment.

Discussion

In our construction and thematic analysis of the assessment poems, we highlighted several unintended consequences of the current neoliberal accountability policies, such as the emotional damage that high-stakes assessments can do to students on a personal level. By classifying people into various dichotomies, such as abled/disabled, academic/vocational, and high achieving/low achieving, many thought that assessments are going too far in their labeling of students. In their dystopic futures, the participants imagined a continual and pervasive testing environment and labeling continued on in an extreme, moving towards the point where the labels are reaching beyond the tests and are applied to the individual themselves (Stobart, 2008). These assessments were seen by some of the informants as irrelevant, but for students, they could be the difference between promotion or retention, the advanced track or the remedial track, or in extreme cases, graduating or dropping out (Amrein & Berliner, 2003).

The participants' present accounts of assessment in schools were very bleak. Our participants indicated that they did not like the current standardization, layout, and emotional/personal implications of assessment. Conversely, the future of assessment was mostly utopic. Participants wanted to imagine the future of assessment to be less focused on testing and standardization, and instead more focused on individualization and helping

children succeed. There were several dystopic visions of the future, but they were only mentioned when the participants were prompted to share their worst-case scenarios. All of the participants shared their utopic visions first. These visions also tended to be of assessment in the more immediate future instead of in 50 years. Since assessments in these schools are currently changing to a new system, most participants were focusing on what they thought this new assessment might look like.

Limitations and Implications

The main limitation of this study is that the results are not generalizable, but that is not the goal of narrative research. Instead, our aim was to highlight the unintended consequences of high-stakes assessment in the schools. A major implication of this study was to highlight voices of those in the assessment field that feel that educational policy needs to move away from the current focus on large-scale, high-stakes, standardized assessments. While our informants differed in the specifics of how they wanted assessment to change, they all couched their utopic visions in comparisons to what they dislike about assessment now. Their dystopic imaginings followed the lines of either assessments staying the same as they are now, or intensifying the negative aspects of the current context and policies. This signals that we need to reevaluate our currently policies and move in a different direction. Our participants did not want to imagine that the future would be negative, but instead they remained hopeful despite their current grievances with the accountability system. More research needs to be done in order to properly bring to light the worries of the present and the hopeful accounts of a future not governed by neoliberal policies.

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Appendix: Data Poems

The Past

Katie
Just paper-based data
Hard to get information on students right away
Were expected to perform your best
Never knew what happened
Very isolated that way

Brian
I'm six years old
Put in a different classroom, unknown
Gave us the test book, the last question read
Draw a picture of a man

What kind of man? A superhero?
Myself as a kid, or maybe my dad?

Well, a stick figure
A circle with a body and stick arms
Shoes and a hat!
Happy to be done, to go home and play

Weeks later, a meeting
Parents, teacher, psychologist, principal

Chad
No sweat, no pressure, no preparation
Just confidence
Homework and involvement fill the grade gaps
Not rigorous

Ashley
Thinking back to my childhood
Assessment wasn't a big deal
Just like a spelling test
My first real test was the HSCT
You couldn't graduate until you passed
I did well in school
I was looking forward to the test
My earliest memory was a relatively positive one

Fine on math, reading looks good
But concerned about the picture

Not what they were looking for,
Didn't meet their expectations
How should I know?
Before I was satisfied with my man
But then I was humiliated

The Present

Ashley
We had the SAT in second grade
It was not high stakes
It didn't matter what they got
Third grade was retention year
Parents were all concerned
I knew how high stakes it was
We prepped for it a little
I didn't let it consume them

Chad
FCAT is coming soon
Over testing our kids
Tiring, boring, to sit there and do nothing
But it's necessary,
Gives feedback

Don't think it's changed,
The same as I remember
Students don't seem pressured
But glad I'm not a student in this time

Brian
The stress is so overwhelming
You need a way to get rid of it, to overcome
A week later and I'm still carrying my stone
The assessment isn't over
The judging has just begun

We teach kids to be successful,
Successful *on* assessments
The society we've structured, we've created
Evaluation is a necessity
It's so overwhelming

Assessments have created classes of people
We tell ourselves we value individualism
But that's a lie
We're creating a bland, standardized world
Fearful, and resistant to change

Katie
We are in a real transitional time
We have so much more support
Assessments support them as a learner
It's a promotional criteria
A graduation criteria
Reflects on students

The Utopic Future

Brian
Value every kid for who they are
And not live in a world classified by ableism

We need to change how we teach
What we teach
When we teach
And why we teach

Individualized, trans-disciplinary instruction
With small class sizes

Access technology, utilize technology
Determine the skills needed for life success
And teach differently
Assess differently

With local control
Local management

Chad
Different graduation tracks,
Different graduation degrees
Preparing kids for jobs
Or college

More technology
Individualizing instruction
And assessment
More options

Katie
We are going with so many things being online
I'm hoping that its immediate feedback for
Students and teachers
Teachers walking around with iPads
Teachers can instantaneously give supporting
Instruction

Local development of schools
And local, not national, not common
Community and culturally-based assessments

Ashley
Tests would be given to truly monitor progress
To see how kids are doing
We stop standardizing children
Assessments are more relative
To the people taking them
They won't be so canned
It will be more learner-centered

We're in a huge transition
Will we have wires hooked up to our heads?
It almost seems like we could leap to that level

The Dystopic Future

Chad
Tested all the time
Maybe every week

Tested, tested, tested
That's all they do,
All we do as teachers

Instead of asking them to think,
We just teach them to pass the test

Ashley
I am afraid were gonna have a
Standardized test for every subject
More kids will be failing school than ever
It reminds me of like thinking about the
Future of the environment
A very grey place with a bunch of factories

Brian
Expectations marginalize instead of include
Separating us farther and farther
Stress and pressure increase
A devastating effect on
Mental and emotional health

Tracking students by deficits, not abilities
Perpetuates stereotypes
They must achieve a lesser goal
But the goal isn't the only thing lessened,
The student is as well

Author Note

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