



Summary report SICI workshop

Title of workshop: Perspectives in Research: What can be driving forces in the relationship between inspection and research? What can be the added value?

Date: 30 and 31 March 2023

Venue: Funchal - Madeira

Number of participants: 53 participants (including Madeira)

Number of participating countries/ members: 53 participants from Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, France, Germany Bavaria, Jamaica, Lithuania, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Portugal (mainland), Portugal Madeira, Slovenia, Spain (Basque Country, Sweden,), UK England and UK Scotland.

What was the aim of the workshop and to what extent has it been achieved?

Concerning the theme of the workshop - Perspectives in Research: What can be driving forces in the relationship between inspection and research? What can be the added value? -, the main objectives were:

- to reflect about the different perspectives of the concept of research in inspection;
- to identify the driving forces in the relationship between inspection and research;
- to consider the added value of research to inspectorates, inspectors, schools and decision makers;

In those two days, in plenary sessions, discussions and small groups works provide us different perspectives and approaches about research and inspection, the complementary relationship between internal and external research and its added value to the quality of schools.

Therefore, aims were achieved, essentially due to the thoughtful and well-prepared presentations, the discussions and the small groups works.

What lessons have we learned as a result of this workshop?

In this working meeting, we had the opportunity to learn about good practices in this relationship between research and inspection, and learn about the added value of research to inspection, schools, inspectors and public policies.

It is true that research allows for complementing and validating inspection analysis and data in order to foster a climate of trust with schools that underpins a co-construction and co-creation session approach between inspection and schools.

External and internal research foster schools with an independent and objective analysis of their strengths and weaknesses, to determine the most effective way to provide critical self-review, ultimately so that educational establishments become better places both for their students and for those who work in them.

In other hand, research provides to inspection public accountability, in the sense of transparency, responsiveness, in order to validate inspection practice and consolidate educational policies.

The following contributions to the workshop were the most interesting:

All the presentations brought good ideas and contributions for this workshop.

On the first day we had the conference by Jorge Morgado, from Madeira about “Inspection and Research: first approach...”. He talked about the concept of research in education. He made an initial theoretical and scientific approach to the concept of research and investigation. Then he presented the internal activities of the Madeira Island inspectorate, in the pedagogical and administrative areas, ending his lecture with the added value of research to Inspectorate, Inspectors, Schools and Policy Makers.

After that, Estela Costa, from the Institute of Education - University of Lisbon, talked about “the inspectorate, to inspectors, to schools and to policy makers. Research and Inspection: What’s in it for schools?” She pronounced about the evolution of the modes of institutional regulation of educational systems and its impact on the changing concept of inspection and the challenges brought about by this change. She continued her presentation, listing several authors who have developed qualitative research, quantitative research, case studies in the area of inspection, as well as research and investigation work carried out by the Portuguese (mainland) Inspection Department. She concluded her presentation talking about the issues worth considering regarding inspection and research in education.

Roxanne Korthals, from the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, talked about “The added value of research at the Inspectorate of Education in the Netherlands”. Firstly, she presented the mission and the main goals of the Dutch Inspectorate of Education, in order to frame the educational system research. She also explained the inherent procedures to achieve this. They use the evaluation research, based their approach on evidence in order to learn and to gain insights into the quality and effectiveness of the processes and to increase quality, as well as to justify their approach. She finished her presentation with several examples of research in the Dutch educational system.

In the afternoon, in session B, she presented an interactive workshop, named “Designing research with the Dutch Inspectorate of Education”, where we had the chance to know the process of research at the Dutch Inspectorate, and then to write our own project plan.

After lunch, we had two parallel sessions.

In session A, Javier Martin and Ituarte Maider from the Basque Country presented “Research and Inspectorate: four approaches to the topic”. The four approaches were about “Inspectorates taking advantage of external & classic research”; “Inspectorate itself as agent of research”; “Inspectorate as the both above” and “Inspectorate as the subject of research”.

They crossed those different approaches of research to conclude that external and internal research gives them the opportunity to promote good practices in schools, as well as to influence the decision makers on their educational investment efforts and resources in specific contents.

Ana Márcia Pires from Portugal (mainland) and Sandie Mourão from CETAPS (Centre for English, Translation, and Anglo-Portuguese Studies from The College of Social and Human Sciences of the NOVA University of Lisbon) presented “English in primary education: Inspectors and researchers collaborating to manage the curriculum.” They talked, generally, about the plan of activities of the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science, namely about the monitoring activity about English in primary education. They also described the process of building this activity, the tools used, the partners and collaborators involved. After that, they talked about the specificities of teaching a foreign language in primary education. They concluded with the benefits from the point of view of Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science and from the point of view of the expert involved in this research activity.

After the intervention of Roxanne Korthals in the parallel session B, Pádraig Mac Fhlannchadha, from Ireland, talked about “The relationship between inspection and research”. He started with an overview of Inspectorate in Ireland, led us to an interaction between inspection and research, the drivers in the relationship between inspection and research in the Irish Inspectorate, and finished pointing the challenges in developing the relationship between inspection and research.

After the coffee break, we had a presentation “Learning development: an internal and external research activity for school improvement”. Carla Teixeira and Noélia Campos from Regional Inspectorate of Madeira, presented an internal research monitoring activity named “Learning development”, its general objectives, procedures and major conclusions. The main purpose of this activity is to observe and analyse the planning, implementation and assessment of pupils’ learning. An external research activity for school improvement was also presented by Gorete Pereira, Fernanda Gouveia and Nuno Fraga, from the Education Research Centre of the University of Madeira, named “Pedagogical leadership, methodologies and learning assessment processes in contexts of Autonomy and Curriculum Flexibility. A narrative in RAM schools”, which main goal was to understand, in the narrative of the schools and from the voice of the pedagogical leaders, the appropriation by the school of the discourse of the educational policy associated with Law n.º 55/2018 and its follow-up and monitoring.

The parallel sessions ended with pertinent discussions on the subjects presented, highlighting the issue of the importance of the relationship between inspection and research.

On the second day, we had small groups’ work, reflecting on the proposed theme: “Overall... what can be driving forces in the relationship between inspection and research? What can be the added value?”. After the groups presented their conclusions, Jorge Morgado, the chief inspector of Madeira and Janie McManus, president of SICI Executive Committee, closed this workshop, highlighting the contributions of all participants to the theme of this workshop.

The following activity forms were very successful:

According to the results of the anonymous evaluation questionnaire, in which participants would have to evaluate items related to contents, organization, speakers, results and expectations, and a global evaluation of the event.

Among the answers collected, it is possible to verify that the content (interest, relevance and duration) obtained a total average of 79.37%, the organization (installations and conditions, didactic equipment's, support documents and schedule observance) obtained 83.33%, speakers (clarity, knowledge of the themes, capacity to answer questions and time management) achieved an average of 76.2%. In relation to the results and expectations, 81% considered that themes approach was according to their expectations and 71.6% deemed the practical utility of the workshop. This meeting was successful and corresponded to our objectives and expectations, as we obtained, among the participants, a global average of 85.70%.

What would be a good follow-up theme or activity?

Continuing the theme, it would be important to identify the challenges and opportunities of research in inspection and its impact on school's quality.