

# Lessons from the past: An overview of the issues raised in the 1911 'Report of the Consultative Committee on Examinations in Secondary Schools'

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*We will improve standards for all pupils and close the attainment gap between the richest and poorest. We will enhance the prestige and quality of the teaching profession, and give heads and teachers tough new powers of discipline. We will restore rigour to the curriculum and exam system and give every parent access to a good school.*

Conservative Party Manifesto, 2010

To what extent have the issues and concerns in education changed during the past century? The summary of educational aspirations provided in the Conservative Party Manifesto identifies seven key matters of direct concern to students, teachers and parents in 2011. However, how different are these topics to those which were investigated a century ago? This article summarises the educational issues raised by the 1911 report "Examinations in Secondary Schools" (Board of Education, 1911), a document which made recommendations which were to set in place an educational system in England which proved both enduring and successful, and examines briefly how many of the issues are still current today.

It is beyond the scope of the article to compare the issues with those of today in any great depth; rather the intention is to celebrate the centenary of the report with an overview, which it is hoped will allow other commentators to explore the material in greater detail. The temptation to 'pair' quotations from 1911 with those from more recent documents, either to illustrate the similarity of thinking or the diversity of approach, has been resisted as far as possible, despite the fact that the 1911 report contains so much detail that it would be possible to find examples of quotations for many current issues. Where documents are quoted, the title and date of the report are given as sources, rather than the authorship, as this avoids the jumble of acronyms and lengthy committee titles which would otherwise ensue.

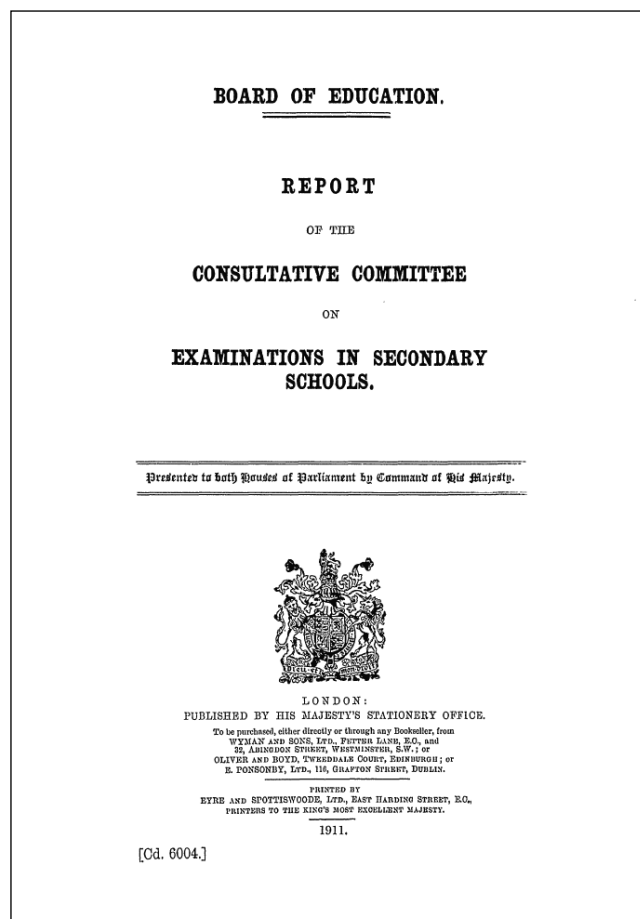
## "Examinations in Secondary Schools": The 1911 report

In 1911 the Board of Education invited a committee to consider the question of "when and in what circumstances examinations are desirable in Secondary Schools (a) for boys and (b) for girls."

The committee comprised twenty individuals, and was headed by the Right Honourable Arthur Herbert Dyke Acland, an Oxford-educated barrister who had been MP for Rotherham between 1885 and 1899 (UK Parliamentary Services, 2009). Amongst the other members of the committee were two church ministers, one professor, two doctors and an MP. A brief search into the background of some of the committee members shows that they comprise similar figures as might be invited to provide evidence to government today: amongst others were Marshall

Jackman, who was Secretary of the National Association of Inspectors of Schools and Educational Organisers, Albert Mansbridge, who had founded the Workers' Educational Association in 1903, and Harry Reichel, who was instrumental in founding a national University of Wales (Aldrich and Gordon, 1989). The committee included four women. Three of these were Margaret Tuke, one of the first women to be educated at Cambridge, and Principal of Bedford College at the time of the report, Sophie Bryant, Headmistress of North London Collegiate School, suffragist, campaigner and mountaineer, and F. Hermia Durham, an historian, first winner of the Alexander Prize (Royal Historical Society, 1945) and between 1907 and 1915 the organiser of trade schools and technical classes for women for the London County Council (Hartley, 2003). In 1915 she was appointed to lead the programme of engaging women to keep businesses running during the First World War.

The political background to the 1911 report bore some similarities to that seen in 2010 and 2011. A General Election had been held in January 1910, after the House of Lords vetoed David Lloyd George's 1909



'People's Budget'. The 'People's Budget' had sought to introduce new taxes on the wealthy (most notably a land tax and increased inheritance tax), the revenue from which was intended to bring about social reform through social welfare programmes. Instrumental in the budget were Liberals Asquith, Lloyd George and Churchill. The January election resulted in a Conservative/Liberal Unionist hung parliament. A second election was held in December, but produced an exact tie in results, and the Liberals formed a government with support from the Irish Nationalists.

Undoubtedly a time of great political and social change (especially with regard to the role of women in society, which is reflected in the particular detail given to girls' education in the various reports discussed in this article), a considerable number of Committees were commissioned in order to comment on matters of social concern. In the field of education alone there were six major investigations between 1906 and 1916, comprising 'Questions affecting higher elementary schools', 'School attendance of children below the age of five', 'Attendance, compulsory or otherwise, at continuation schools', 'Examinations in secondary schools', 'Practical work in secondary schools' and 'Scholarships for higher education'.

In the century since the publication of this report, many aspects of society have changed out of all recognition. Transport, is one example of this and telecommunications another. Edwardians, whilst present at the birth of the motoring and flight industries and well acquainted with railways, would undoubtedly be amazed by the extent, variety and speed of transportation infrastructure in place today. Equally, although the centennial anniversary of the first telephone was celebrated in 1976, the development of satellite systems, mobile telephones and internet has revolutionised the way in which we communicate. But what of education, and particularly, assessment? Would the Edwardian members

of the 1911 Consultative Committee recognise the issues in assessment and testing which beset us today? Or have the changes in policy and practice which have occurred in the meantime altered the underlying concerns?

Between 1911 and 2010 at least 52 Acts of Parliament related to education were passed, informed by some fifteen White Papers. Admittedly some of them exist only to repeal the Acts of previous administrations; others still are minor, amending some small part of the system. Nevertheless, it seems likely that there has been substantial change in the system, given the amount of legislation that has been enacted.

The Edwardian drive towards commissioning investigative reports from individuals who might be expected to combine sound research skills with relevant expertise has remained a feature of the education system throughout the century, beginning with six Hadow reports between 1923 and 1933. Figure 1 provides a list of some of the reports which followed.

The titles of these reports give an indication of the vast breadth of interest that has been taken in education.

Returning to the 1911 Report into Examinations in Secondary Schools, to what extent are the specific concerns about assessment continuing to pose problems today? The report was organised into five chapters:

- A history of education in England
- A description of issues and problems, entitled "The Present State of Things"
- Further investigation of issues, entitled "The Difficulties and Disadvantages of the Existing System of External Examinations in Secondary Schools"
- Suggestions for reform
- Practical solutions.

**Figure 1: Education Reports 1934–present**

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Spens (1938) <i>Secondary Education</i>	Taylor (1977) <i>A New Partnership for Our Schools</i>
Norwood (1943) <i>Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools</i>	Waddell (1978) <i>School Examinations</i>
Fleming (1944) <i>Independent Schools</i>	Warnock (1978) <i>Special Educational Needs</i>
Percy (1945) <i>Technological Education</i>	Mansell (1979) <i>A Basis for Choice</i>
Barlow (1946) <i>University Places</i>	Rampton (1981) <i>West Indian Children in our Schools</i>
Clarke (1947) <i>School and Life</i>	Cockcroft (1982) <i>Mathematics Counts</i>
Clarke (1948) <i>Out of School</i>	Thompson (1982) <i>Youth Service</i>
Gurney-Dixon (1954) <i>Early Leaving</i>	Swann (1985) <i>Education for All</i>
Crowther (1959) <i>15–18 Provision</i>	Kingman (1988) <i>Teaching of English</i>
Beloe (1960) <i>Secondary School Examinations other than GCE</i>	Higginson (1988) <i>A Levels</i>
Newsom (1963) <i>Half our Future</i>	Elton (1989) <i>Discipline in Schools</i>
Robbins (1963) <i>Higher Education</i>	Rumbold (1990) <i>Starting with Quality</i>
Lockwood (1964) <i>Schools Council</i>	Dearing (1993) <i>The National Curriculum and its assessment</i>
Plowden (1967) <i>Children and their Primary Schools</i>	Dearing (1996) <i>Higher Education in the Learning Society</i>
Newsom (1968) <i>Public Schools Commission</i>	Kennedy (1997) <i>Further Education</i>
Dainton (1968) <i>Science and Technology in Higher Education</i>	Moser (1999) <i>Improving Literacy and Numeracy</i>
Donnison (1970) <i>Public Schools Commission</i>	Tomlinson (2004) <i>14–19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform</i>
Durham (1970) <i>Religious Education</i>	Steer (2005) <i>Learning Behaviour</i>
James (1972) <i>Teacher Training</i>	Steer (2009) <i>Learning Behaviour: Lessons Learned</i>
Russell (1973) <i>Adult Education</i>	Rose (2009) <i>Independent Review of the Primary Curriculum</i>
Swann (1974) <i>The Flow into Employment of Scientists, Engineers and Technologists</i>	Browne (2010) <i>Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education</i>
Bullock (1975) <i>A Language for Life</i>	

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**Table 1: The main issues identified in the 1911 report**

Issue	Details	Issue	Details
<b>The role of the Board of Education and its relationship with awarding bodies</b>	A lack of communication and co-operation between examining bodies and authorities, although the Oxford Delegacy and UCLES are praised for their Joint Board on behalf of Oxford and Cambridge Universities, as are the Universities of Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds. <i>... the Board of Education do not themselves conduct examinations in Secondary Schools (except indirectly, of course, by means of their Preliminary Examination for the Certificate), nor have they laid down any specific rules for external examination... Generally speaking it would appear that there is no formal co-operation between the Board of Education and the various examining bodies, so far as the actual conduct of their examinations is concerned.</i> The Committee reports that there has been some, limited, progress in terms of co-operation and knowledge-sharing between the Board of Education and the ABs through the work of the Board's schools inspectors, who are encouraged to comment upon the preparation for external examinations as witnessed in schools, and to share this with the ABs. Equally, the ABs are encouraged to supply copies of their reports on Secondary Schools to the Board. However, <i>in practice the actual extent of the co-operation is as yet somewhat slight. The examiners hardly ever inspect, and the inspectors never take part in external examinations, nor are their respective estimates of the general efficiency of a school ever officially correlated.</i>	<b>A multiplicity of examinations in schools</b>	The Committee had made extensive efforts to gather data to evaluate the position. A survey from Lancashire suggested that approximately 26 different examinations were (commonly) taken. The data suggested that 1,070 students from this region entered examinations during the year 1910–1911 (just under a fifth of the 12–16 school population) and the ages of those students were as follows: 2 below 12, 38 aged 12, 112 aged 13, 169 aged 14, 261 aged 15, 314 aged 16, 230 aged 17, 106 aged 18 and 42 aged 19.  Much information is presented about local regulations which were being brought in to forbid schools from presenting scholars for examination at the younger age ranges, and also regulating the number of general examinations which might be taken. For example, <i>The Middlesbrough Education Committee forbids pupils to take any external examination other than the Cambridge Local until they have entered their fourth year at school.</i>
<b>Too many awarding bodies, all operating in overlapping areas</b>	<i>The possibility of more concerted action under the conciliatory action and unifying influence of the Board of Education.</i>  Leads to 'incidental' competition.	<b>Failure of many present external examinations to have regard to some important parts of school curriculum and school life</b>	The examples given are vocational subjects <i>which cannot as a rule be tested without inspection, and that such inspection would be very costly even if the examining bodies had a staff of inspectors competent to do the work.</i>  Moral and physical training, pupils' character, behaviour, steadiness, perseverance, influence, all omitted from external examinations.
<b>Equivalence of qualifications</b>	<i>The diversity and independence of examining bodies make it impossible to find a common denominator between their examinations. The difficulty is not that the existing standards are too high or too low, but rather that those of different bodies vary, and that a recognised standard cannot at present be settled on its merits.</i>  (Also III vii)	<b>School inspections</b>	Described as a recent innovation. <i>A full assessment is held every 3–5 years, and an ordinary inspection every year.</i> The committee voices a concern that the inspection reports (a 'reasoned' report on the whole working of the school) are often not made available by the schools to the parents whereas examination successes are.  The exam boards are accused of conducting both formal inspections, and using their position to carry out additional inspection: <i>sends examiners who, in fact, conduct what is a virtually an informal kind of inspection as part of their examining work. Thus...the work of their examiners includes visits to the school for the purpose of inspecting the buildings and apparatus, observing the school organisation and discipline, and hearing lessons given by school staff.</i>
<b>The use of examination results to enhance a school's reputation</b>	<i>This point was put to us very plainly by Mr Cyril Norwood "Schools," he said, "were greatly tempted to produce as long an honours list as possible, and put boys and girls through examinations which were often quite unnecessary and even a hindrance. Sometimes clever pupils were utilised rather unscrupulously to enhance the credit of a school by achieving examination successes."</i>	<b>The demands which examinations make upon the pupils' school time</b>	<i>Mr Paton supplied us with definite instances in which pupils had spent nearly six weeks of their summer term in attending scholarship examinations...the loss of 30 per cent of their time which would otherwise have been given to systematic coherent study in class.</i>
<b>Problems arising from the wide number of combinations of examinations and the way in which their comparability is used</b>	<i>... we may point out that while candidates can obtain their Oxford Senior Certificate by passing in five subjects, no one set of five subjects is accepted by the exempting bodies. A candidate would have to pass in eleven subjects ...to be sure that his certificate would be accepted by all the bodies who accept the Oxford Senior Certificate as qualifying a candidate for exemption from their Matriculation or Preliminary Examination. If he only passed in the five subjects required by one particular body, and then for any reason changed his plans and needed to use his certificate to obtain exemption from the examination of some other body, he might find it quite useless to him...</i>	<b>Isolation of the examining bodies from the schools</b>	<i>This causes problems with curriculum, school methods and school experiments (e.g. subjects which are less easy to examine are left out of the curriculum, teaching methods are restricted to those which assist examination success and development of alternative types of school are hindered).</i>

Table 1 summarises the main issues identified in the report, as described in the second and third chapters.

Other issues mentioned in less detail in the 1911 paper include:

- Premature disintegration of classes due to multiplicity of external exams.
- Teachers not having a large enough role in terms of consultation on external exams.

- No sound way in which schools may be judged by the public.
- Physical and mental overstrain [of pupils].
- Failure of the exam system to keep pace with educational innovation in schools.
- Special difficulty facing the Civil Service Commission because of the needs of international candidates from elsewhere in the Empire.
- Parental pressure.

- Awarding Bodies' class lists, honours, distinctions, prizes and scholarships accentuating the competitive element of examinations.
- Extent to which University requirements determine the syllabus of Secondary School examinations, though the number of pupils who proceed to University is a very small minority.

## To what extent are these issues still current a century later?

The role of the Board of Education and its relationship with awarding bodies has changed greatly. Far from there being 'no co-operation and knowledge-sharing', there are strong links between the Regulator (Ofqual), the awarding bodies and other educational bodies. This was formalised in the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act (2009) where Ofqual's remit was defined:

*It's our duty to ensure standards are maintained in the qualifications system. We primarily do this by evaluating qualifications, and the bodies that award them, against nationally established criteria. For this reason we formally recognise awarding organisations by checking they have adequate resources to award their qualifications.*

The argument that there were too many awarding bodies, all operating in overlapping areas has been partially addressed with the introduction of regulation, which was also a part of the recommendations of the 1911 Committee:

*The establishment of a central Examinations Council, widely representative in character and entrusted with the powers necessary for carrying out the main principles laid down in this Report... The function of the council would be the supervision of all external examinations in recognised Secondary Schools... The establishment of an Examinations Council on such lines would secure in all essential points the advantages of centralised authority and of diversified experience, both of professional and local needs. It would bring into order the present confusion. It would replace multiplicity of standards by unity of control. (Examinations in Secondary Schools, 1911)*

Arguments about equivalence of qualifications still dominate educational forums, and the 1911 commentary on this is revealing – it was not that standards were too low or too high which was the problem, rather the committee identified difficulty in deciding upon an agreed standard. In some ways this has become more complicated in the present day, with difficulties deciding upon how to define a standard, let alone set in place its agreed 'merits'. This has, to a large extent been brought about by the expansion of purposes to which the results of examinations are put, and brings us to a situation which is very similar to that described in 1911: *problems arising from the wide number of combinations of examinations and the way in which their comparability is used*. In 1911, students wishing to follow different pathways into further training or employment needed to take multiple sets of examinations; in 2011 there are widespread questions about the suitability of the available assessments to sufficiently fulfil the different purposes to which they are put. Whilst the issue of a *multiplicity of examinations in schools* does not necessarily exist to the same extent in the context of age 14–19 public examinations (which was the 1911 context), it still exists in the arguments about National Testing, as described in Testing and Assessment (2008) as the 'burden of testing'.

Using examination results to enhance a school's reputation was a practice rooted in the behaviour of schools themselves, according to the 1911 report. In 2008:

*... we find that the use of national test results for the purpose of school accountability has resulted in some schools emphasising the maximisation of test results at the expense of a more rounded education for their pupils. (Testing and Assessment, 2008)*

The concern in 1911 was that 'clever' pupils were subject to unnecessary examinations in order to reflect well upon the school. In 2011 the concern tends to be that schools direct more attention to the C/D borderline students and other students suffer.

*... the focus of GCSEs has been very heavily on the C–D border line, and not, for example, on students underachieving by getting a grade A, but who could hopefully get an A\*, or on those getting a B, but who could be helped to get an A. (Testing and Assessment, 2008)*

In both 1911 and 2008 there is concern about the narrowing of the curriculum, as can be seen by the similarity of the sentiments expressed in the two quotations below:

*... there must always be a danger that young pupils will be allowed to drop useful but uncongenial subjects at too early an age, whether for their own supposed advantage or for that of the school. (Examinations in Secondary Schools, 1911)*

*... the majority of time and resources is directed at those subjects which will be tested and other subjects in the broader curriculum, such as sport, art and music, are neglected. (Testing and Assessment, 2008)*

The 1911 concern about the *failure of many present external examinations to have regard to some important parts of school curriculum and school life* is perhaps the one issue least changed today, as the quotations below illustrate:

*Tests, however, can only test a limited range of the skills and activities which are properly part of a rounded education, so that a focus on improving test results compromises teachers' creativity in the classroom and children's access to a balanced curriculum.*

*The phenomenon described as 'narrowing of the curriculum' is strongly related to teaching to the test and many of the same arguments apply. There are essentially two elements to this concept. First, there is evidence that the overall curriculum is narrowed so that the majority of time and resources is directed at those subjects which will be tested and other subjects in the broader curriculum, such as sport, art and music are neglected. Second, within those subjects which are tested, the taught curriculum is narrowed to focus on those areas which are most likely to be tested ('narrow learning') and on the manner in which a component of the curriculum is likely to be tested ('shallow learning'). (Testing and Assessment, 2008)*

The demands which examinations make upon the pupils' school time is apparent in recent arguments:

*Another theme which manifests strongly in the evidence relates to the quantity of testing and there is concern that the quantity of national testing is displacing real learning and deep understanding of a subject. (Testing and Assessment, 2008)*

However DfES evidence to Testing and Assessment (2008) strongly opposed this, pointing to recent changes, including: KS1 testing

incorporated into normal lesson time, KS2 testing totalling less than 6 hours, KS3 testing totalling less than 8 hours, less coursework at GCSE and reduction of the number of A level units from 6 to 4. Additionally:

*The Minister told us that no pupil spends more than 0.2% of their time taking tests. (Testing and Assessment, 2008)*

The issue of quantity of examination time also features in the linear-modular debate:

*In addition, it is currently possible for AS students to sit retakes in order to maximise their grades at the end of the A-level course. It has been argued that this places too great a burden on pupils, diverting them from study of the course to focus on examinations. (Testing and Assessment, 2008)*

Isolation of the examining bodies from the schools was not described consistently in the 1911 report. On the one hand there was concern that the awarding bodies were not close enough to schools to be able to adequately provide, in the assessment curriculum, a true reflection of schools' needs. However, in the school inspections discussions, the awarding bodies were criticised as being somewhat over-eager. Watts (2008) confirms that inspection was considered a part of the examinations system and formal procedures existed for this. Fast-forward one hundred years and inspections (in England) are the remit of an independent, impartial non-ministerial government department. Similar departments exist in Scotland (HMIe), Northern Ireland (Education and Training Inspectorate) and Wales (Estyn). Whilst the role of school inspections has moved away from the awarding bodies, relationships with schools have strengthened greatly – support and training to schools from awarding bodies is available via formal events (such as Inset) and less formal means, including internet discussion boards and extensive support materials.

Some of the more minor concerns of the 1911 committee are still an issue today. Disruption of classes due to the multiplicity of external exams is no longer a problem in the sense understood in 1911, but does still feature in the linear-modular debate. The soundness of the means by which schools may be judged by the public remains a current concern, as does the balancing act of assessing a curriculum suitable for Higher Education needs whilst at the same time providing for students who do not intend to follow that route.

Looking at the seven key aims of the current government there is much that was of concern in the 1911 committee report, notably the issues of curriculum rigour, the system of examining and the improvement of standards. Whilst there are plenty of examples of instances where the issues have changed, even turned upside down, it is clear that were Arthur Dyke Acland and his fellow committee members to be presented with the issues at stake in 2011, there would be much that they would recognise from their deliberations in 1911. It is to be hoped that they would be pleased – much of the underlying structure of the current system, including development of the current GCSE and A level qualifications structure, has evolved from the antecedent qualifications structure suggested in their report. However, all three of the fundamental principles of the examination system identified in chapter IV of the report remain current issues in 2011:

- Exams should be intimately connected with inspection. The Committee members might be disappointed to discover that by tying school accountability to national testing and the use of examination results in league tables, a considerable number of

additional issues have emerged which are dominating educational debate a century later.

- The multiplicity of exams should be reduced. In 1911, this could be described as more of a practical problem, arising from the development of geographical regions and the existence of many separate qualifications for entry to different professions. However, the need to provide school accountability has proved to create its own problem of a multiplicity of national tests. Added to this is the debate surrounding the multiple purposes to which the results from examinations are put; a twist to the 1911 debate which has arisen as a consequence of making fewer examinations serve more purposes.
- External exams should be focussed on a clear purpose of helping schools to provide a broad education to age 16, which would provide the foundation for a variety of future study.

The recommendations of the 1911 report led to the School Certificate Examination system, and a more structured curriculum, as described in 'Differentiation of the Curriculum for Boys and Girls Respectively in Secondary Schools'. (1923):

*These Regulations provide that the minimum curriculum for pupils between the ages of 12 and 16 must include English Subjects, Foreign Languages, Mathematics, Natural Science and Art. We understand that the existing practice is to require the continued study of History, English, a foreign language, Mathematics and a branch of Natural Science throughout this stage, with individual exceptions – general exceptions being allowed only on special grounds.*

The School Certificate required students to pass five subjects, including a humanity, language and maths/science (Watts, 2008). This system has been echoed very recently:

*So we will introduce a new award – the English Baccalaureate – for any student who secures good GCSE or iGCSE passes in English, mathematics, the sciences, a modern or ancient foreign language and a humanity such as history or geography. (The Importance of Teaching – The Schools White Paper, 2010)*

## Summary

The purpose of this article has been to mark the centenary of the 1911 document with an overview of the key issues raised and a relatively brief examination of the extent to which they are current today. However, the wealth of detail in the reports examined, much of which has been beyond the scope of the current article to report, is fascinating and it is useful to consider the value of looking back at the thinking behind earlier educational decisions. It is easy to think of our twenty-first century selves as sophisticated, critical thinkers and to assume that our predecessors a century ago must have been less well-versed, or more simply equipped, or just led a different life with fewer issues. Close acquaintance with the detail in the 1911 report suggests far otherwise. The Committee did not consist of educational philanthropists making comments from an ivory tower of prestige or privilege. Rather, it was made up from experienced educationalists, with practical experience of conditions in schools who backed up their recommendations with practical examples. The paper is studded with evidence from relevant sources. The 1911 document, and many other similar documents (for example, the six Hadow reports published between 1923 and 1933), are extremely detailed and set out

very clearly the thinking behind the decisions that were made. Tracing the outcomes of those decisions, through the legislation which followed, and into policy and practice can inform current educational debates, particularly in instances where consideration is being made of similar initiatives to those which have gone before. It is in these instances that it is possible to be informed by hindsight.

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## ASSURING QUALITY IN ASSESSMENT

# Evaluating Senior Examiners' use of Item Level Data

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Many of CIE and OCR's written examination scripts are now scanned and marked on screen by examiners working on computers. One benefit arising from on-screen marking is that the marks are captured at item or question-part level and are available for analysis in Cambridge within hours of being submitted by examiners. Cambridge Assessment now routinely analyses these item marks and provides subject staff and senior examiners with reports containing Item Level Data (ILD) for nearly all examinations marked on screen. In this article we present findings from an evaluation of senior CIE and OCR examiners' use of these Item Level Data reports.

## Background

Historically, CIE and OCR's written examinations were marked on paper and usually only the total marks were captured electronically. Consequently, if item marks were to be analysed they first had to be keyed in from a sample of written scripts, and this constrained the availability of item level data. With the introduction of on-screen marking, however, marks are now routinely captured at item level for a large and growing number of CIE and OCR's written examinations.

In addition to introducing on-screen marking, Cambridge Assessment has made a major investment in infrastructure to provide research and evaluation staff with:

- a data warehouse providing easy access to operational data, including item marks;
- statistical analysis and reporting tools;

- automation tools (for automating and scheduling analysis and reports);
- an Intranet Portal for publishing statistical reports and data to colleagues across the organisation.

This new infrastructure has enabled us to start routinely producing ILD reports for most CIE and OCR examinations marked on screen. An indication of the scale of this activity is that during peak periods last summer (2010) we analysed 60 million marks per night across nearly 600 examinations.

## The nature of the Item Level Data provided

Previous work in Cambridge Assessment identified the kinds of Item Level Data and presentation most useful to subject staff and senior examiners (Johnson, Gill, Elliot and Black, 2006).

We now produce ILD reports on two occasions: firstly during marking, then again after grade boundary marks have been set and candidates' grades are known. The first set of reports are provided to assist subject staff and senior examiners with tasks relating to the current examination, such as providing reports on the candidature's performance and recommending grade threshold marks. The second set of ILD reports, provided once marks have been finalised and candidates' grades determined, are to assist with post-hoc evaluations of the examinations to help identify any improvements that can be made in future examinations. ILD reports are made available as web pages on our Intranet Portal and as documents in pdf format. Few senior examiners