

Research News

Conferences and seminars

3rd International Rasch Measurement Conference

In January Tom Bramley attended the 3rd International Rasch Measurement Conference in Perth, Western Australia and presented a paper entitled 'Maintaining performance standards using expert judgement: a rank-ordering method'. Topics discussed at the conference included Rasch model applications in education, computer adaptive testing, developments in Rasch modelling and item banking.

American Educational Research Association (AERA)

Beth Black attended the AERA conference in New York in March and presented work on maintaining performance standards using expert judgement.

Association of Language Testers Conference (ALTE)

The ALTE 3rd International Conference, hosted by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, took place in Cambridge in April. The theme of the conference was *The social and educational impact of language assessment*, and the aim was to form a bridge between the world of language assessment and educational, social and economic environments and contexts. Gill Elliott, Nat Johnson and Sylvia Green of the Research Division presented their paper on *'Aspects of Writing: Using an atomistic approach to evaluate qualities of features of writing'*.

House of Commons Research Seminar

The third House of Commons Research Seminar, chaired by Barry Sheerman MP, Chair of the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee, was held on 24th January. The theme was *What makes a good teacher? An overview of teaching effectiveness research*. There were presentations from Professor Patricia Broadfoot, Professor Mary James and Professor Debra Myhill followed by a plenary session. The aim of these seminars is to bring together members of the research, academic and education communities as well as policy makers and influencers.

New Horizons seminar

In April Tom Bramley, Beth Black and Tim Gill from the Research Division gave a seminar in Hughes Hall, Cambridge on *The rank-ordering method for maintaining standards by expert judgement*. The rank-ordering method is a new technique for equating the raw score scales on two tests by using expert judgement. The judgemental task involves experts making relative, holistic judgements about examples of student work from two tests and combining these into a single rank-order.

This seminar discussed the development of the rank-ordering method out of the Thurstone paired comparisons method used in UK comparability research, and showed how it has been applied in several standard-maintaining contexts. The seminar then discussed some theoretical and practical issues raised by the method, before finally considering how it could capitalise on new developments in on-screen marking.