

Achieve

Spring 2011

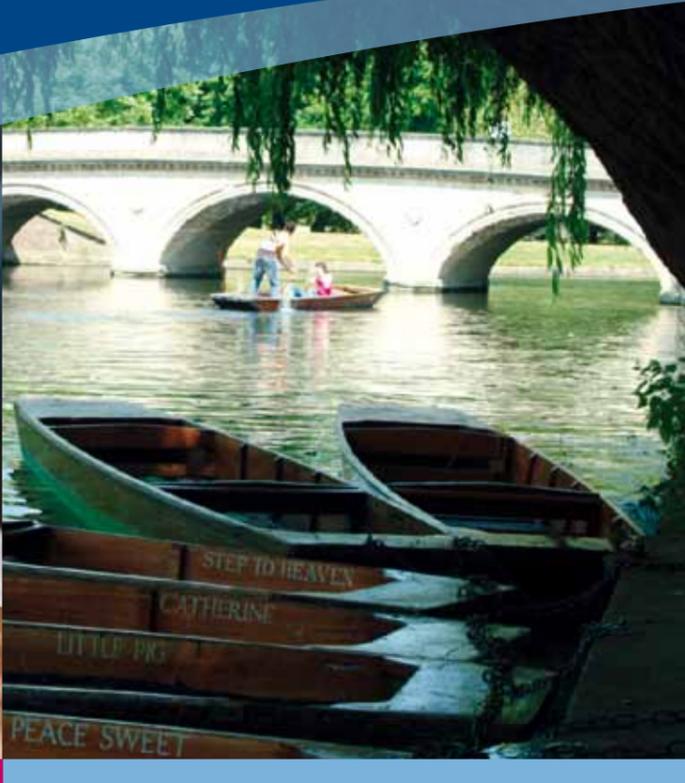


CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



Welcome to *Achieve*

The latest news from Cambridge Assessment, the University's international exams group.



Real HE engagement

Forging closer relationships with HE in the role and design of post-16 qualifications in the UK. see page 4



UK med schools accept Cambridge English

The number of medical schools in the UK recognising Cambridge English language tests trebles. see page 5

Educating an interconnected world

"Education for an interconnected world is not just for the mobile elite", said the head of Cambridge Assessment at an international conference.

The major policy challenge of how and what skills and knowledge different countries give their students was at the heart of the event, hosted by Cambridge Assessment, at One Great George Street, London on 15 March 2011.

Cambridge Assessment's Group Chief Executive, Simon Lebus, explained the importance of global awareness for all students. Although many would study at an international university or work for a multinational corporation, most would probably work within one country, he said. But they would all face the same challenges of working with and respecting other cultures.

This was amplified by the experiences of Lesley James, Director of Business Development at the RSA's Opening Minds Academy in Tipton, West Midlands, who pointed out that her students struggled with understanding how they could make a contribution to their local community, let alone the rest of the world.

There was a wide degree of agreement among the educationalists, embassy representatives and teachers
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Delegates at Cambridge Assessment's *What kind of education enables us to cope with an interconnected world?* debate at One Great George Street, London.



Graham Stuart MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee.

NEWS IN BRIEF

OCR backs Wolf Report

The much anticipated Wolf Report on vocational education recommends a raft of changes to the infrastructure that currently dictates how vocational qualifications are developed, delivered and funded. OCR believes these changes will serve learners across the spectrum of achievement much better than the current system.

Mark Dawe, OCR Chief Executive, said: "OCR wholeheartedly supports the thoroughly researched findings of the Wolf Report. The recommendations safeguard the interests of young people with measures that can support real progression, raise the quality of vocational provision and, crucially, secure core achievements in English and maths.

"We agree with the report's statement that no single, centrally defined option is likely to suit everyone; the proposals have the potential to sweep aside systemic barriers created by target-driven funding regimes, a plethora of quasi-official approval processes and invidious league table measures. We see a real opportunity to engage with schools, colleges, independent providers and employers to develop appropriate curriculum choices."

English Baccalaureate: a good measure of success?

The Government's introduction of an English Baccalaureate (EBacc) – a new performance indicator to measure schools in England according to how many pupils achieve grades A*-C in five core subjects – has led to much interest amongst Parliamentarians. The subjects are English, maths, double science or its equivalent, history or geography and a foreign language (ancient or modern). Given the level of concern that is being shown amongst teachers and others in the education community, the House of Commons Education Select Committee, which I chair, has recently announced an inquiry into the issue.

I entirely understand why Ministers have made their proposals for the English Baccalaureate. They want to ensure that young people receive a sound academic education and are not shunted onto courses which are easier to pass but which lack rigour and value in the employment market place. The EBacc is effectively six or seven subjects (with double or triple science) which, with compulsory religious education and PE to be added, leaves little room for other courses such as drama, economics, music, ICT or vocational courses such as young apprenticeships.

It would be a shame if effective provision for lower performing pupils was dismantled because it didn't fit with the EBacc. After all many schools have used vocational qualifications to re-engage disaffected pupils. There is no reason why non academic courses should lack rigour and, if they do, no reason why action can't be taken against them while leaving the good courses alone.

Headteachers in my own constituency – including the headteacher of a particularly high performing state school – have raised concerns about the potential impact of the EBacc. They say that the Government promised to trust teachers and support headteachers in deciding how best to meet the needs of their students. My local heads think the EBacc does the exact opposite. They are concerned that publishing tables and rating schools in this way places them in a strait jacket, with no choice but to comply, which is to the detriment of students. In some cases it is not that teachers don't agree with the concept of an EBacc per se – but that they are opposed to the prescriptive way in which this Baccalaureate has been constructed.

I hope the Government remain open minded on this issue. I absolutely understand their desire for rigour and to ensure that everyone in our society has the opportunity to access a decent academic education. However, at the same time, we must ensure that vocational and other courses outside the EBacc are not squeezed out and be sure that the benefits of the EBacc are not outweighed by the costs.

Group's expertise is called upon...

In keeping with its position as experts in assessment, Cambridge Assessment's Group Director of Assessment Research and Development has been appointed to the Government's National Curriculum review panel.

Group Chief Executive Simon Lebus said: "I am delighted that our educational expertise has been drawn upon by the Government. Cambridge Assessment is always happy to help policy-makers to improve the country's education system – both at home and abroad."

To read Tim Oates' paper *Could do better: using international comparisons to refine the National Curriculum in England*, which includes a foreword by Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, the UK Secretary of State for Education, visit:

www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/ca/News_Room/Latest_News/News?id=135542



Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment and Chair of the National Curriculum Review Expert Panel.

Cambridge IGCSEs expand nationally

Recent changes to UK Government policy on International GCSEs have resulted in increased take-up of the qualification among UK schools.

Over 500 UK schools, including 200 from the state sector, now offer Cambridge IGCSE from University of Cambridge International Examinations.

UK Government launches new benchmark for school achievement

The English Baccalaureate, or EBacc, is a new group award to be used as an additional indicator in KS4 performance tables. It came into effect for the 2010 School Performance Tables which were published in January 2011.

It is awarded to pupils attaining A*-C GCSE and Cambridge IGCSE passes in five subject areas: English, maths, science, humanities and languages.

The Government's decision in June 2010 to fund the qualification was welcomed by state schools who wanted to offer greater choice to students. University of Cambridge International Examinations is the only exam board to have IGCSEs accredited by Ofqual in all the core subjects and is now seeking accreditation for a wider range of subjects.

In February 2011, Ofqual accredited Cambridge IGCSE German and Spanish, bringing the total number of Ofqual-accredited Cambridge IGCSE subjects to 18. Accreditation is pending for Mandarin Chinese; English Literature (with coursework); English First Language (reading and writing only); Enterprise; Global Perspectives; and International Mathematics. As soon as accreditation is confirmed, these subjects will be available to teach in state schools.

Another significant change in Government policy has been to include IGCSE in its annual School Performance Tables – called league tables in England – for the first time.

Educating an interconnected world

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gathered as to what interconnectedness in an educational context meant. The common set of skills which emerged included: an awareness of global issues; a collaborative approach to learning/work; information (subject knowledge/technical skills) and IT fluency; creativity, critical thinking, problem solving skills; and multilingualism.

These skills were also recognised by representatives from Hong Kong, India and the US as being important in their own approaches to education to enable their students to compete on an international level playing field.

In addition to skills, Ann Puntis, Chief Executive of University of Cambridge International Examinations, acknowledged that there also had to be a balance of core understanding. The 21st century attributes she identified that would help students to build future skills – if delivered by excellent, interconnected teachers – included: mathematical understanding; scientific knowledge; multilingualism; literacy; historical understanding; geographical awareness; and critical appreciation.

From a university perspective, Richard Partington, Senior Tutor at Churchill College at the University of Cambridge, explained the challenges of recruiting applicants from different educational and cultural backgrounds from across the globe. He went on to explain how Cambridge accommodates this in terms of communication, assessment, support and of course, within its admissions process.

Commenting on the debate Roger-François Gauthier, Inspector General for Administration of National Education and Research, France and a UNESCO Consultant, called for “all educational systems to be put under review and largely reinvented: as neither the old tradition of school knowledge nor the old



Lesley James, Director of Business Development at The RSA Academy.



Roger-François Gauthier, Inspector General for Administration of National Education and Research in France.



Ann Puntis, Chief Executive of University of Cambridge International Examinations.

THE INTERNATIONAL LEARNERS' VIEW

Students from India and China have a higher expectation of working overseas than those from the UK and US, according to research from University of Cambridge International Examinations.

The findings correlate with UNESCO research about higher education movement. However, from the students surveyed on average two-thirds expected to work with people from another country. 1,700 students aged 16–18 in Argentina, Brazil, China, India, UK and USA were surveyed about their subject choices, career aspirations and migration prospects.

The survey showed that two-thirds of students wanted to go on to higher education and almost a quarter choose subjects to help with their future career and higher education course. In fact, 99 per cent had already chosen their ideal career and sector. The most popular, with more than half of students choosing these areas, were engineering, medicine, the arts and business. Other popular sectors were science, education, law and finance. More than a quarter of students choose their subjects to help with their career, particularly in the UK and India.

conception of national knowledge seems satisfactory anymore in an interconnected world”.

Over 60 people including international teachers, assessment experts, employers and journalists attended. A packed conference was supplemented

by live streaming and more than 700 people watched the proceedings online.

To watch the debate in full or to download the podcast visit: www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/ca/Viewpoints/Viewpoint?id=136322

Learning behind bars

There are five key principles for offender learning and skills in prisons, according to UK exam board OCR whose views were sought and recognised in the Review of Offender Learning report published by the UK's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

From OCR's experience and as the provider of choice – virtually all prisons use OCR qualifications – it knows that: secure IT facilities and internet access for offenders; the integration of learning programmes with other prison activities to extend learning opportunities; relevant training and development for prison officers and other contributors to Offender Learning & Skills Service programmes; a service-wide database of transferable offender records; and incentives – in particular, equal or higher pay – for offenders to participate in education, are key to effective offender learning.

OCR's Head of Offender Learning and Skills Group, John Brenchley, said: “We're delighted BIS incorporated our views into its report. However, the one massive question which needs an answer is, why, when there is so much isolated good practice across offender learning,



is it not systematically applied across the entire service? In our view the systematic adoption of identified good practice is not just a priority but an essential.”

In its contribution to the Review, OCR also emphasised the need to get as many prisoners as possible on appropriate learning programmes and then to support them up to the highest level, right up to degree standard.

Basic Skills, Key Skills and IT qualifications are the most in demand qualifications in prison education. Every year OCR awards some 22,000 Basic Skills certificates and 7,000 Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) certificates to prisoners. But last year, several thousand OCR GCSE, AS and A level units were also awarded.

Real HE engagement

At a time when university admissions and the value of a university education are seldom out of the news, closer relationships with Higher Education (HE) are being forged by OCR – and the parent Cambridge Assessment Group as a whole – through face to face meetings and a consultation process.

Working together to shape the new generation of relevant and meaningful qualifications for 18 year olds, starting with the next round of A levels in 2013, is on the table.

OCR, through its parent group, is part of the University of Cambridge and therefore has a good perspective on ways of improving progression from school to university. In 2009/10, there were over half a million entries for OCR's A levels. Vocationally-related qualifications such as OCR's Level 3 Nationals also attract UCAS tariff points and are a recognised entry requirement for over 140 HE institutions.

OCR's new strategic forums which took place last autumn and this spring brought together senior personnel from a range of institutions to establish a strong working partnership.

The initiative was welcomed by Professor Debra Humphris, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Southampton University, who described the strategic forums as "really useful... to debate and inform the work of

OCR. The relationships between universities, schools, colleges and awarding bodies are critical in ensuring clarity for students about the nature and range of qualifications." But she admitted, "universities also need to explore how best we inform the work of awarding bodies to prepare students for the transition to higher education, and the information we make available about our requirements".

At a policy level Cambridge Assessment's consultation process with HE aims to establish an effective model for engagement between the sector and UK awarding bodies, given the "divorce" between the two sectors over recent years. Its paper sets out one proposed model where HE takes a major role in specifying the content criteria of post-16 qualifications, enabling them to help set the standard of these qualifications. This model also suggests that 'communities of practice', which will include HE, should be set up around each post-16 qualification, enabling the standards of each qualification to be owned and maintained by those with a direct interest in them. However, the paper also emphasises that to ensure



ongoing interaction between HE and awarding bodies there must be proper institutional support arrangements in place.

The Group asked HE institutions for feedback on its policy proposals and has now submitted its findings to the Department for Education as its work around this area develops.

US to use Cambridge benchmark

Eleven states in the United States are using Cambridge exams to improve students' performance.

The pilot programme, designed by the National Council on Education and the Economy (NCEE), has certified University of Cambridge International Examinations as a provider of 'board exams' to help increase the proportion of students who leave high school ready to do college-level work, without the need for remediation, and therefore more likely to succeed.

The initiative follows a long-term study by the NCEE into countries whose students typically outperform all others in international comparisons of academic achievement. They discovered that high performing countries use some variation of board exams, and their use is the principal reason for their success.

From September 2011 schools in Arizona, Connecticut, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont will take part in the pilot programme. Schools in these states can choose to offer one of the NCEE's approved board examination systems, including programmes from Cambridge. According to the NCEE, they have "identified the best instructional systems in the world available in English" for US learners.

It is anticipated that at least 40 high schools, representing at least 10 states, will pilot the programme and the NCEE will publish formal findings from the project in September 2014.

STATESIDE SUCCESS

In some parts of the US, Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) programmes are already established, particularly in schools in Florida. Sherry Reach, Regional Manager, Americas said: "Students successfully completing Cambridge AICE programmes are being accepted to study at top US universities. In many cases their AICE qualifications can be credited towards the requirements of a bachelor's degree."

University of Cambridge International Examinations recently undertook a predictive validity study to determine how well Cambridge AICE programmes prepare US students for success at university, using data collected from three years' worth of students enrolled at Florida State University.

Stuart Shaw, Principal Research Officer at Cambridge, said: "Results for this small case study show that for the same SAT score, Cambridge AICE students perform better than IB students, whether or not gender and race are controlled for. There does not appear to be any meaningful evidence of differences in performance at university between Cambridge AICE and Advanced Placement students."

Such research will be useful to schools in the NCEE pilot programme as they now choose which board exam system to offer their students.

Growth in worldwide demand for quality

There is an encouraging rise in the number of employers, universities and government organisations around the world who now accept the high-level English test *Cambridge English: Advanced*.

Global data from the early part of 2011 shows that more than 2,600 organisations now recognise the qualification produced by Cambridge ESOL which tests the English skills needed for demanding professional and academic situations.

Nicola Johnson from the organisation says this massive boost in acceptance is "really encouraging as it shows how seriously organisations around the world are taking English language ability. Those who take the test will be assessed on their real-life communications skills, the type you need to confidently deal with complicated academic and professional tasks in English."

The exam is set at Level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), an internationally recognised benchmark of language ability. This is the recommended level for work at a managerial or professional level or to follow a course of academic study at university level.

Explaining the benefits of the test's link to the CEFR, Nicola said: "People who pass this test will be able to show employers and universities exactly what they can do in terms of English ability."

A levels are good but could be better

In a robust defence of A levels, the head of Cambridge Assessment accepted the need for change and painted a positive way forward.

Speaking at the Annual UCAS conference for teachers and advisors in February, Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment [pictured], said: "A levels are far from having had their day. They offer choice, flexibility and provide excellent preparation and performance predication for university. They also leave curriculum space for other forms of enrichment and development, without prescribing the form they should take.



"However, the perception of falling standards, criticism that modularisation permits 'gaming' of the system and the growth in alternate qualifications – albeit one of the positive features of the English system that these qualifications can exist side by side – have all taken their toll on the qualification's reputation.

"To restore confidence in A levels there must be real engagement, unmediated by state agencies, between exam boards and HE. Universities could also make better use of existing raw exam data to differentiate between students if UMS [uniform mark scale] marks were included on exam certificates..."

Simon's paper *Have A levels had their day* is available at www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

UK medical schools accepting Cambridge English trebles

The number of medical schools in the United Kingdom recognising Cambridge English language tests more than trebled in a 12 month period, according to new figures. As of December 2010, 26 schools from across the UK now accept the English language tests from Cambridge ESOL compared to just seven a year earlier.

Language experts Cambridge ESOL, who compiled the figures, say this boost is part of a growing trend in the healthcare industry where language ability is moving to the top of the skills agenda.

Cambridge ESOL's Nicola Johnson says: "It's essential that those coming to the UK to study medicine have the language skills they need to get the best out of academic life and these figures are very encouraging. Cambridge English assesses real-life communications skills which are essential in the healthcare industry."

The Cambridge English tests recognised include Cambridge English: Advanced and Proficiency. They are now used for entrance onto a range of Higher Education courses at medical faculties including the Universities of Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Barts and the London School of Medicine and Dentistry.

The tests recognised are all set at level C1 or higher of the Common European Framework of References for Languages CEFR, the internationally recognised scale of language ability. At level C1, users can converse easily in English and are easily understood by native speakers and learners from other countries. They can understand complex verbal discussion and read long documents.

Guide to good testing

Meeting the "great responsibility" that language test developers increasingly face is covered in a new book by Cambridge experts.



The *Principles of Good Practice*, published this January by Cambridge ESOL, sets out their approach to language assessment, test development and quality management – in light of the life-changing events associated with taking an English test.

Writing in the book, Cambridge's Dr Mike Milanovic outlines the best approaches to ensure language testing is fair, accurate and valid: "Language ability is being used increasingly as one of the key criteria for life-changing decisions such as immigration, education and employment," writes Milanovic. "If we look at English language testing, the stakes associated with passing a test have dramatically increased in the last two decades. With this comes a great responsibility for assessment providers to develop tests that are fair, accurate and valid."

The book explains how the Cambridge-based exam board – which delivers 3.25 million tests each year – follows four guiding principles when developing tests. These are fitness for purpose, communication and collaboration, quality and accountability and validity and validation. According to Milanovic, readers will see how their approach to development ensures tests "are practical to deliver and have a positive impact on individuals and society as a whole".

"You're hired"

The announcement by the Coalition Government last November that the percentage of the Skills Funding Agency's budget assigned to Apprenticeships would almost double from 12.7 per cent in 2010/11 to 22 per cent by 2011/12, (representing an extra £244 million), confirmed the place of this system of training on the political agenda.

Over 85,000 businesses are currently thought to offer Apprenticeship programmes, covering around 200 different job roles. This April, the new Specifications for Apprenticeship Standards in England, which sets out minimum requirements to be included in Apprenticeship frameworks, come into force.

OCR's vocational qualifications currently cover 14 of the Apprenticeship frameworks, including a number of the most frequently used in Business and Administration, Customer Service and Health and Social Care.

The exam board has been working closely with the National Apprenticeship Service to ensure that

OCR's qualifications and support meets the needs of employers and training providers. New administration and delivery guides are being developed.

As well as off the peg component qualifications, OCR is working in partnership with employers to create specific programmes to suit their employees. OCR's IT Professionals qualification, Procom, is now being used for IBM's first Apprenticeship scheme, an initiative welcomed by FE, Skills and Lifelong Learning Minister, John Hayes. OCR is providing bespoke assessment for the talented apprentices who have gained places on IBM's two year programme, and has mapped IBM's training to OCR's nationally-recognised IT qualification.



Other high profile employers using OCR qualifications for their Apprenticeship delivery – this time in the creative and digital media field – include the BBC and Channel 4.

Class of '41: Inspiring Polish servicemen and women commended by Cambridge

Language testing experts from Cambridge University paid homage to the thousands of Polish servicemen and women who took English language examinations during the 1940s at a ceremony in London earlier this month. The event, held at the Sikorski Museum, marked the 70th anniversary of the first Polish student sitting a Cambridge English examination in the UK. A former archbishop, a minister of justice and a Professor of law at Oxford University were just some of alumni identified from this period.

"Going through the list of ESOL students, at moments, it reads like a veritable who's who of the Polish military establishment," said Dr Andrzej Suchcitz, the Keeper of the Archives at the Sikorski Museum. He explained how the candidate lists show test takers ranging from: "Generals, colonels, naval captains, commanders and senior air force officers."

During this historic event, a group of candidates from the 1940s were reunited to mark the anniversary in a touching ceremony. This included veteran Eugene Borysiuk who proudly brought along his original certificate bearing the University of Cambridge Crest. Eugene explained how he came to the United Kingdom in 1943 when he joined the Polish Air Force Scheme. He later enrolled as a student in a technical school at RAF Holton, Buckinghamshire and received weekly English lessons. In 1946 he, along with a number of other comrades, sat and passed his lower Cambridge certificate. Later he went on to become a company Quality Director of an electronics company.

Among the audience were the First Secretary of the Polish Embassy for Educational Affairs, Poland's Military Attaché to the UK and the Polish Consul in London.

"The story of the Polish forces in the UK deserves to be much better known, and the Sikorski Institute and this fascinating museum are doing outstanding work to document it," said Cambridge ESOL's Christine Nuttall who acknowledged the remarkable speed and thoroughness with which so many Polish forces soldiers learnt English during this period. She said: "What we see from our records is the evidence of large



numbers of Polish soldiers getting a really thorough knowledge of English in only two or three years."

Records show Polish servicemen – and women – starting to take English language exams in 1941, with numbers growing throughout the war, and the immediate post-war years, peaking in 1948 when on one day in March nearly 2,500 men and women from the Polish Resettlement Corps took the Lower Certificate in English in specially arranged exam sessions all over the UK. Delegates at the event in London were given examples of question papers from the period and heard the first public broadcast of recordings from Cambridge ESOL's archive of Polish airmen taking Cambridge speaking tests in 1944.

Hanna Zbirohowska-Kościa with other English language candidates from the 1940s.



Hanna Zbirohowska-Kościa with Cambridge ESOL's Karolina Herman.

Central Europe embraces approaches to test fairness

How testing experts from around Europe ensure fairness in language assessment was the theme of a major European conference recently held at Charles University in Prague.

The University hosted the November meeting of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) which brought together language experts from 34 countries with a number of showcases of their work in this area. The 150 delegates, from many of the world's leading language assessment bodies, got to see best practice measures for test security, how to write unbiased test question material and fairness provisions for accommodating candidates with disabilities.



PhDr. Jindřich Fryč from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports in the Czech Republic.

Professor Antony Kunnan from California State University opened the conference day with a presentation on his test fairness framework and later chaired a round table discussion.

"It's really encouraging to see work going on all over the world that helps to ensure language tests are fair to all candidates regardless of their individual background, circumstances and physical ability," said plenary speaker Dr Nick Saville who heads up Cambridge ESOL's research department. "This need for fairness is more important than ever with language tests now commonly being used in important decision-making processes such as for immigration and higher education."

PhDr. Jindřich Fryč (pictured) from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports in the Czech Republic described hosting such an important event as "an honour" in his opening remarks. ALTE members have worked together for over 20 years to address quality and fairness in all areas of language testing, and the association now represents 27 languages including many less widely taught and spoken languages, which made the event particularly significant for the Czech speaking hosts.

Kateřina Hlínová and Kateřina Vlasaková from Charles University, ALTE'S newest member, showcased the Czech Language Certificate Examinations – a new Czech language proficiency test for foreigners. Also covered were ethics in language testing from Dr Piet van Avermaet, the Director of the Centre for Diversity and Learning at the University of Ghent, Belgium; security for high stakes testing from Cambridge ESOL's Juliet Wilson; and a look at practical provisions to ensure fairness for candidates with disabilities.



How do children learn?

There was a lively debate about the science of how children learn and the implications this has for education policy at Cambridge Assessment's seventh Parliamentary Research Enquiry at the House of Commons.

Experts in neuroscience, psychology and education emphasised the importance of motivational and contextual influences, together with the importance of active, directed learning in ensuring that a child's potential is realised. Those attending agreed that neuroscience needs to have a bigger impact on policymakers than at present. A fair degree of consensus emerged around the need for discourse to shift to a focus on children and learning, both in terms of cognitive and emotional development.

The event, chaired by Graham Stuart MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee, was jointly organised by Cambridge Assessment, the University of Cambridge's international exams group, and the University's Centre for Science and Policy.

Those presenting their findings – as listed below – were questioned by UK Parliamentarians:

- Usha Goswami, Professor of Cognitive Developmental Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge
- Robert Burden, Emeritus Professor of Applied Educational Psychology at the University of Exeter
- Trevor Robbins, Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Cambridge.

Usha Goswami focused on how children learn at a primary level. She spoke about the way in which learning environments can maximise learning potential. However, she pointed out that creating such optimal learning environments for young children requires high level skills. She also said that there had been too many empty debates around learning difficulties, for example around whether dyslexia really exists, which had prevented children from receiving early and targeted support.

Robert Burden explained, from a secondary school perspective, the role of pupil motivation which he said was the most significant contributor to successful learning outcomes. He said that how pupils perceive themselves as learners is important in contributing to educational success or failure and that schools should seek to foster the academic self-esteem of their pupils as an integral aspect of the teaching-learning process.

Trevor Robbins then spoke about the diversity of learning processes, stressing that we are all born with certain strengths and weaknesses in different areas.

The discussions that followed spanned a number of topics including: the role that language plays in the



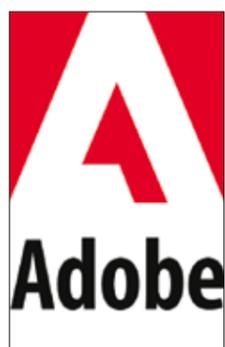
early years; the importance of structures and support systems; whether the cognitive learning processes had determined the break points in education; and the age at which children should start school.

Cambridge Assessment's Parliamentary Research Enquiry series are designed to bring together a wide range of professionals in education to look at 'big picture' topics and enable policy makers to access the knowledge of leading experts.

For those unable to attend podcasts of the event are available downloaded at www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

Staying connected

In the rapidly changing world of technology, working with big name companies such as Microsoft, Cisco and Oracle helps to ensure that vocational qualifications stay relevant to the needs of both employers and employees.



Adobe and OCR have joined forces over the last 12 months to integrate the Adobe Certified Associate (ACA) qualification in popular programmes used in day-to-day business such as Dreamweaver, Flash and Photoshop, into two OCR IT qualifications.

Learners, whether in education or in employment, can now take units specialising in these Adobe programmes as part of OCR's Creative iMedia and ITQ qualifications. This means that those with skills in Adobe's creative software can now achieve two nationally-recognised IT qualifications from OCR.

According to Adobe's Liz Wilkins, Senior Marketing Manager for Adobe Systems UK, initiatives such as these are needed in what is still a difficult job market, particularly for graduates. "Digital media tools can help to equip students with the skills that will be required of them in the workplace. With the employment climate as it is, it is even more important that initiatives such as these are put into place to create a link between students and professionals to help bridge the gap between education and industry."

Technology in assessment



Staff from across the Cambridge Assessment Group at the 2011 BETT show – one of the largest education technology exhibitions in the world – demonstrating how they effectively use and deploy modern technology.

Cambridge Pre-U update

In September 2011, University of Cambridge International Examinations will launch a new Cambridge Pre-U Short Course in Mathematics (Statistics with Pure Mathematics) with first examination in June 2012. This new syllabus is designed for students who want to extend their maths studies beyond GCSE, without committing to an in-depth two-year course. More syllabus developments are planned for 2012. For more details visit: www.cie.org.uk



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Recognising care work

New specialist health and social care qualifications have been launched to improve the quality of care that people receive in the UK.

According to the Alzheimer's Society, there are approximately 750,000 people with dementia in the UK, a figure set to increase to over a million by 2025. Caring for people with dementia has huge implications yet a recent survey suggested that 40 per cent of care home staff leave their job within a year of taking up post, 60 per cent within two years.

The new 'Dementia Care' qualifications, designed by UK exam board OCR, are aimed at anyone involved

in the care of people with dementia working in residential care homes, day centres or at home, while the new 'Children and Young People's Workforce' qualifications, are for those working with children in a range of roles such as early years workers, foster carers, or children's social care workers.

OCR has worked alongside key charities such as the Alzheimer's Society and the NSPCC to make sure those taking the new qualifications are supported by relevant resources, such as online learning tools.

The qualifications are based on a new framework developed by the relevant Sector Skills Council to meet the needs of employers and are based on best practice.

Transatlantic tie boosts English language learning opps

Learners around the world now have greater access to high quality internationally recognised language qualifications thanks to a new collaboration between two top universities.

University of Cambridge ESOL examinations and the University of Michigan English Language Institute Testing and Certification Division, joined forces in September for a new collaboration that will promote the Michigan English language exams around the world. It will also work with stakeholders in different commercial and educational sectors, especially in the USA, to develop testing solutions precisely tailored to their needs.

Cambridge and Michigan are teaming up at a time of rapid growth in the global use of English language tests, with enormous demand for high-quality assessment for education, business and migration. Both organisations emphasise the need for learners and institutions to be able to choose between a range of tests that exactly meet their needs, rather than generic 'one-size-fits-all' solutions.

Dr Michael Milanovic, CEO of Cambridge ESOL, said: "There is enormous synergy between our two

organisations. We are both university-based, not-for-profit exam boards, committed to high-quality assessment and to supporting research and learning, and we both have teams of highly qualified, committed and professional staff."

"We are bringing together the highly talented and skilled testing divisions of two world-class universities with the global distribution network of Cambridge ESOL, opening up significant opportunities for growth," says James Penner-Hahn, Associate Dean for Budget at the University of Michigan College of Literature, Science and the Arts. "We believe this will propel the use of University of Michigan tests to a much broader audience."

A new entity – Cambridge-Michigan Language Assessments (CAMLA) – will deliver the collaboration, with a management board from both Michigan and Cambridge.