

Achieve

Autumn 2010

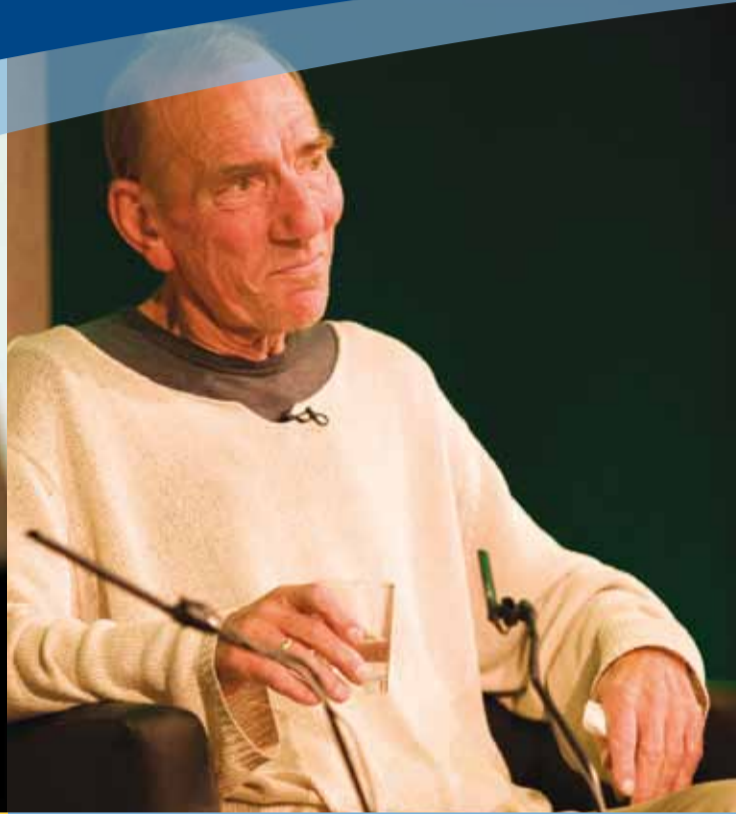


CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



Welcome to *Achieve*

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



Hollywood touch for GCSE English Literature

Actor Pete Postlethwaite tells teachers how to bring texts for OCR's new English Literature GCSEs to life. see page 7



UK interest in Cambridge IGCSE soars

UK interest in Cambridge IGCSEs has risen sharply since the Government made funding available for state schools. see page 8

What makes a good education?

Good education puts people in charge of their own future, according to Education Secretary Michael Gove.

Addressing the question, 'what do you think makes a good education' at a Cambridge Assessment fringe event, the Education Secretary said he believed all children should have a broad academic education by the time they are 16.

Michael Gove used the example of history to argue that skills such as the weighing up of sources needed to be learnt, but that it was also important to have knowledge of when certain events had occurred. He said that the current league table system meant schools are making bad decisions on which qualifications to take, and that the Government should not be decreeing what schools should do but providing information to allow them to make good decisions.

The fringe events were held in collaboration with the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the Association of Colleges (AoC) at all three main party conferences and drew good audiences at all three. Panellists from Cambridge Assessment, ASCL and AoC were joined by Education Secretary Michael Gove MP at the Conservative conference, former Schools Minister Lord Jim Knight at the Labour conference, and member of

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Rt Hon Michael Gove MP Secretary of State for Education and Brian Lightman, General Secretary of ASCL.



Mark Hendrick MP, Chairman, All Party Parliamentary China Group.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cambridge showcase European language Survey in Brussels

SurveyLang – the European Commission’s Survey of Language Competences across Europe – was a highlight of Cambridge ESOL’s third annual language conference at the European Parliament in October.

“Supporting multilingualism through language assessment” is held each year to celebrate multilingualism and the European Day of languages. This year it was jointly hosted by MEP Hannu Takkula, MEP Carl Haglund and MEP Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez who is the Vice-President European Parliament.

Speaking at Brussels Dr Neil Jones, the project’s Vice-Director, said the survey will provide the data that decision-makers in Europe need to make evidence-based policy decisions on language learning.

The Survey which is being carried out in early 2011 was the focus of an informal lunch at the European Parliament where participants from across Europe learnt more about what is to be the first systematic benchmark of language competence throughout Europe.

The event also included the seminar “Resources for a multilingual Europe” chaired by Olga Cosmidou – Director General, DG Interpretation and Conferences, European Parliament. This involved a panel of academics and senior officials from the European Union discussing how multilingualism can be encouraged to support language teaching, translator and interpreter training and internationally recognised qualifications.

Nile Egyptian Schools

A new group of schools opened in Egypt in October offering curricula and assessments developed by University of Cambridge International Examinations.

providing extensive teacher training and resources to ensure that teachers are familiar with the learning and teaching approach required by the new curriculum.

Working in partnership with the Egyptian Ministry, CIE was asked to develop English and Arabic medium curriculum and assessments for the first five Nile Egyptian Schools, which will be fully open by July 2015. CIE is also

CIE works with over 30 ministries of education worldwide, and is increasingly involved in bespoke projects to align national education systems with international standards.

OCR to increase access to Cambridge IGCSE

Schools in the UK now have an even wider choice of qualifications according to what they feel best suits their teaching methods and the learning style of their students.

Cambridge IGCSEs alongside its wide spectrum of qualifications to schools.

UK exam board OCR, in collaboration with international sister organisation CIE, is offering

Cambridge IGCSEs are accredited for use by UK state schools and currently taken by over 350 UK schools. Further information on Cambridge IGCSE can be found at: www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/type/igcse/

Building a Better History Curriculum (11–19)

Historians and teachers gathered with policy makers, researchers and stakeholders to debate what a revised history curriculum ought to look like and address how it should work in practice. The one-day conference was hosted by the Better History Group – led by

Dr Seán Lang, a Senior Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University – and supported by Cambridge Assessment.

To read the event proceedings visit: www.betterhistory.org.uk

Computer-based English language testing on the up

Over 350 centres from around the world have now registered to run computer-based versions of Cambridge ESOL’s English tests. Its network of computer-based testing centres now covers 52 countries and this figure is likely to increase further. Cambridge ESOL says the strategy is not to replace traditional testing methods, but is part of wider plan to offer students more choice in the way in which they take English tests.



The Importance of UK-China Collaboration in Education

The positive trend in UK-China relations in recent decades has been characterised by fruitful partnerships in a range of sectors, and education is no exception. The achievements in this field remain one of the UK’s strongest contributions to the flourishing bilateral relationship.

Consolidating these strengths is a key aim of the All Party Parliamentary China Group (APPCG). Since its establishment in 1997 the APPCG has worked to promote deeper and more comprehensive links between the UK and China, and forms an important pillar of the bilateral relationship by providing a channel through which parliamentarians can engage with their Chinese counterparts. While discussion necessarily encompasses all aspects of the relationship, significant attention is rightly devoted to ongoing bilateral collaboration in education.

The arguments for cooperation in this area cannot be ignored. The demands of an increasingly competitive global marketplace mean that it is more important than ever for young people to access high quality education and training. Our interconnected world also means that increasing numbers of young people are now choosing to study English – allowing them access to Higher Education abroad, as well as entry into many types of employment. Furthermore, as I know from my own time as a student in Germany, the experience of studying overseas broadens the mind and cultivates common understanding between cultures. For this reason alone we should welcome the fact that over 30,000 Chinese students come to the UK to study every year, whilst working to boost the (far smaller) number of British students attending courses in China.

Since the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on education in 1997, the British and Chinese governments have established a variety of joint initiatives designed to consolidate educational cooperation including high-level policy dialogues, workshops, study visits, and collaborative programmes to promote graduate employment and scholarships. Substantial progress has also been made outside of the government framework, with forward-thinking universities developing comprehensive partnerships with Chinese institutions. But while progress has been positive, we must continue to extend the range and depth of these mutually beneficial initiatives.

Given the benefits on offer for both the UK and China, the APPCG will continue to work with organisations with working knowledge of the British and Chinese education sectors. In the coming months, the APPCG will be working closely with Cambridge Assessment to address in detail some of the challenges we face, and I am delighted that members will have the opportunity to benefit from the insight and expertise on offer.

What makes a good education?

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the House of Commons Education Select Committee Tessa Munt MP at the Liberal Democrat conference.

Cambridge Assessment spoke of the need for students to have well recognised qualifications, but stressed it was perfectly possible to receive a good education without it being certificated. Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment, said that different teachers and students need different qualifications to reflect learning and teaching styles, and that attempts to put students through a 'single doorway' had not been successful. He emphasised the need for proper user involvement in the development of qualifications, raising concerns about the gradual stepping back of Higher Education from what goes on in secondary schools.

Lord Knight focused many of his comments on the role of vocational qualifications, raising concerns that the gap in attainment had not been closed by the previous Labour Government. His view was that the education system was still dominated by the needs of a few universities and that the vocational route needs to have greater credence.

Tessa Munt MP also stressed the importance of vocational learning at the Liberal Democrat conference, referring to a vocational institution in her constituency which had provided high quality services for students. She said that measurements of education should be more than simply examination results, and focused on individual needs, rather than expectations of schools.

Brian Lightman, General Secretary of ASCL, said all students should have access to both vocational and academic study, emphasising the need for qualifications to be comprehensible to employers, students and learning providers. He stressed that individuals need to have a balance of skills, knowledge and experiences, arguing that knowledge and skills are highly integrated. He conceded that you cannot have learning without assessment but stressed the importance of assessment leading to independent learning rather than a culture based on results. ASCL had concerns that league tables now drive learning but also noted that schools need to remain accountable and that no child should leave school without qualifications.

Right: (L:R) Rt Hon Michael Gove MP Secretary of State for Education, Brian Lightman, General Secretary of ASCL, Kim Catcheside, former BBC education correspondent, Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment and Chris Morecroft, President of AoC.



(L:R) Brian Lightman, General Secretary of ASCL, Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development at Cambridge Assessment, Kim Catcheside, former BBC education correspondent, and Chris Morecroft, President of AoC.



(L:R) Jenni Russell, Guardian and Sunday Times columnist, Bene't Steinberg, Group Director of Public Affairs at Cambridge Assessment and Lord Jim Knight, former Schools Minister.



Tessa Munt MP, Member of Education Select Committee.

Chris Morecroft, President of AoC, pointed out the range of different education paths, saying that it was just as ambitious to choose a vocational path. He also emphasised the importance of independent guidance for students when making decisions about career paths, college and university, allowing them to make the choice that is right for them.



(L:R) Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment and Chris Morecroft, President, AoC.

Does assessment 'measure up'?

Learning needs to be at the heart of assessment, according to Tim Oates, Cambridge Assessment's Group Director of Assessment Research and Development.

Speaking alongside teacher unions the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) at a fringe meeting at the Conservative Party Conference, Tim recognised that whilst there can be a beneficial wash-back of assessment into learning, there can also be a detrimental one. He talked about the need for assessment to be fair, accurate and put to good use. Whilst it was important to be aware of the unintended consequences that assessment can have, he spoke about the vital role that assessment can have in raising levels of attainment.

Mary Bousted, ATL General Secretary, Christine Blower, NUT General Secretary, and Damian Hinds MP and member of the Education Select Committee, joined Tim on the panel which discussed 'Can Assessment Measure Up?'.

Cambridge Assessment attends all three main political party conferences each year to engage with politicians and stakeholders on education policy. As well as holding fringe events, Cambridge Assessment this year met with Ministers and other Parliamentarians at party conferences to discuss issues around qualifications, curriculum and assessment.

Schools report on the educational successes of Cambridge Pre-U

The first full Cambridge Pre-U examination session took place in June 2010 and has been hailed a success. Fifty-nine schools fielded candidates for the examination session, with nearly twice that number of schools expected to enter next year. This year's students performed very strongly, with two-thirds of candidates receiving a Distinction grade.

Mrs Angela Drew, Deputy Head, Academic, of Epsom College, said: "We were delighted by the results achieved by our first cohort of Cambridge Pre-U students. The pupils enjoyed the challenge of the course and we were particularly pleased to see that D1s and D2s really are obtainable with over a third of our candidates obtaining grades indicating achievement at or above A*."

Mrs Drew's view was shared by Andrew Corish, Assistant Head Teacher, Coloma Convent Girls' School, who said: "We've been very supported by a tremendous amount of the top universities and it's made a difference to some of these students getting in. One of our students got into Birmingham University on the strength of her Pre-U result, which we were really thrilled about."

Dr Kevin Stannard, CIE Director of Education, said on results day: "We are delighted to be able to recognise and reward the considerable achievements of this ground-breaking group of students. Teachers and students responded to the challenges and opportunities offered by Cambridge Pre-U very positively."

"We have been working with schools to help make possible a deeper and more enriching learning experience for students, giving teachers the space to explore and innovate, and the freedom to teach, rather than train their students. Universities were engaged from the outset, recognising that Cambridge Pre-U seeks to prepare students for the skills and

dispositions, as well as the knowledge, necessary for successful study at university.

"The success of the first full examination session is a direct result of the hard work of confident teachers and confident students in schools that have collectively shown the way forward for pre-university education."

One of the key features of the design of Cambridge Pre-U is to enable universities to understand in more detail the performance of students who may have received identical grades at A level. This has been achieved through the introduction of a nine-point grade scale, including a grade above the A* grade at A level.

THE FACTS...

- 59 schools entered candidates for this first set of Cambridge Pre-U examinations
- 101 schools are teaching Cambridge Pre-U and planning to enter candidates in the 2011 or 2012 examination session (56 independent schools and 45 state maintained schools)
- A further 180+ have expressed interest in various subject combinations
- 2,246 examination entries (including Principal Subjects, Short Courses and Global Perspectives and the Independent Research Report) from 1,518 candidates
- 111 UK universities have published formal recognition statements
- 59 universities in the US and Canada have published formal recognition statements, including Yale, Stanford and McGill
- The top five most popular Principal Subjects are: Literature in English, Mathematics, History, French and Physics



Six of the best receive bursary awards

Six of the brightest students from the West Midlands will get a cash boost to help them through their studies at Cambridge University thanks to OCR.

This is the seventh successive year that OCR has awarded bursaries to some of the highest flying students in the region.

The bursaries of £3,290, which are paid every year for the lifetime of each student's undergraduate studies, form part of OCR's ongoing commitment to recognise and encourage the achievement of all learners.



The students, from Birmingham, Solihull, Coventry, Sutton Coldfield and Colwall, were presented their awards by Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment and Chairman of OCR, at a ceremony held at OCR's offices in Coventry.

Meteoric rise for GCSE science game

A new online game promoting a GCSE Science qualification has gone 'viral' – with more than 1 million hits in the week since its launch.

Players take the role of a scientist, who is trying to collect weather samples in his plane while negotiating volcanic ash clouds. If they get too close to the cloud, their windscreen is covered in ash and their engine starts to seize up.

OCR Digital Marketing Manager Michelle Hughes said: "Eruption Disruption is an ideal way to launch our new GCSE Science specifications, and using a volcanic ash cloud fitted this perfectly, as air quality is one of the areas covered".

Eruption Disruption is already outperforming its predecessor Reach for the Sky, which received over 650,000 hits in its first week.



To play Eruption Disruption visit: www.ocr.org.uk/eruptiondisruption

Understanding and establishing standards in qualifications

WHAT IS RANK ORDERING?

In paired comparison or rank-ordering exercises, experts are asked to place two or more objects into rank order according to some attribute. The 'objects' can be examination scripts, portfolios, individual essays, recordings of oral examinations or musical performances, videos etc; or even examination questions. The attribute is usually 'perceived overall quality', but in the case of examination questions it is 'perceived difficulty'. Analysis of all the judgements creates a scale with each object represented by a number – its 'measure'. The greater the distance between two objects on the scale, the greater the probability that the one with the higher measure would be ranked above the one with the lower measure.

A new method of comparing examination standards over time is being developed and assessed by Cambridge Assessment. It is known as 'rank ordering' (see box). Experts believe it has the potential to lead to exciting innovations in several aspects of the assessment process.

Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development, says: "The approach carries considerable potential. Firstly, you can compare things which are relatively diverse – such as answers to exam papers from different years or different boards.

This is of great advantage in the comparability work which examination boards undertake in order to monitor standards over time, and between different qualification specifications. Not least, it ensures that comparison of different qualifications is based on genuine scrutiny of student work, not just on the outcomes of statistical modelling exercises. Secondly, paired comparison requires things to be judged more than once, indeed, each script is judged by a number of people, a number of times. This increases reliability – and that's very attractive."

Cambridge Assessment has been at the forefront of these developments and the use of rank ordering in

operational aspects of examinations is being explored and validated. But as with all approaches, it has not and will not be adopted in specific settings without testing its suitability – principally its validity and utility. This requirement for validation is in line with the standards and criteria laid down in The Cambridge Approach – Cambridge Assessment's manifesto and practical guide to the development of assessments.

A summary of Cambridge Assessment's rank ordering and paired comparisons research to date, along with a short video can be found on the website:

www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/ca/Viewpoints/Viewpoint?id=134363

New Chief Executive for OCR announced

Cambridge Assessment has appointed Mark Dawe as the new Chief Executive of its UK awarding body OCR.

Mark, who is currently the Principal and Chief Executive of Oaklands College in Hertfordshire, takes over the role on 1 November from Clara Kenyon who has been Acting Chief Executive following the departure of Greg Watson in July 2010.

Mark is a board member of the Association of Learning Providers, Chair of the Association of Colleges for the Eastern Region, a Trustee of awarding body VTCT and board member of the Principals' Professional Council. He also recently headed the Capital Task Group on behalf of the Association of Colleges and is now Chair of the National Capital Reference Group.

Commenting on the announcement, Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment and Chairman of OCR, said: "We are delighted to appoint Mark; he has a wealth of experience across a broad spectrum in the education field and we are confident that he will lead OCR through its next phase of development."

Prior to his role at Oaklands College, Mark was Deputy Director, FE Strategy at the Department of Education and Skills having joined as Deputy Director, Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit in 2003.

After qualifying as a Chartered Accountant, Mark joined Canterbury College, becoming Head of Corporate



Mark Dawe, OCR Chief Executive as of 1 November 2010.

Services in 1994. In 2000, he set up eGS, an e-procurement provider to public sector customers.

Mark Dawe said: "It is an enormous privilege to be joining one of the UK's leading awarding bodies at such an exciting time in education and assessment. Having been on the other end of the telescope, I relish the opportunity to take OCR's education and curriculum offering to the next level."

Raising the standard of English

Teachers from the Czech Republic have been recognised for raising the standard of English amongst young learners at their schools.

The teachers, from two Primary Schools in the Czech Republic, were invited to Cambridge by Cambridge ESOL and British Council Czech Republic as part of a prize for encouraging children in their schools to take Cambridge's Young Learners English tests. Andy Chamberlain, Cambridge ESOL's Regional Manager said: "Children who learn English early on have a big advantage over their counterparts as it can really open up their options in terms of education and work. It's important to recognise the contribution these teachers are making in improving English language ability in the Czech Republic."

Cambridge ESOL's Young Learners English is a reliable and consistent measure of how well a child is doing in the skills of listening, speaking and reading and writing.

The visiting teachers, who teach some lessons through the medium of English, were: Šárka Ocelíková, Petra Tomanová and Veronika Bendová from Bakalovo Square Primary School in Brno; and Anna Levy and Blanka Voráčková from Emmy Destinove Primary School in Prague.

In the hot seat

The International e-Assessment Journal (leAJ) is a new interdisciplinary journal that aims to publish expert opinion on a range of e-assessment matters, exchanging evidence-based research results and relevant industry trends as well as presenting practical experiences gained from developing and implementing technology enhanced assessment. The journal is supported by collaboration between the e-Assessment Association, Cambridge Assessment and the Computer-Assisted Assessment Conference.



Patrick Craven, Principal Analyst at Cambridge Assessment and chief editor of leAJ.

Patrick Craven, Principal Analyst at Cambridge Assessment and chief editor of leAJ, explains the idea behind the journal and Cambridge Assessment's involvement. He says: "The journal will consolidate and build on the evidence of e-assessment research and activity to-date, but most importantly it will ensure that we focus on how the discipline of assessment can be supported and enhanced by modern technologies."

Achieve asked him to explain more:

Q1: So what is the idea behind leAJ?

There are several journals that explore the role of technology in an educational and learning setting but few if any that approach the subject with a specific remit for assessment. It was also becoming clear that several key papers and reports over the last 25 years were in danger of becoming lost as organisations and the assessment industry evolved. The main idea behind

the journal was to redress this balance and ensure that future e-assessment activity is based on a sound appreciation of what has gone before and driven by assessment issues and not just technology.

Q2: Why is e-assessment such a hot topic?

E-assessment is actually a fusion of two hot topics; how to most effectively accommodate the relentless progress of modern technologies and what form and placement of assessment best meets the intended purpose of the judgement. The former is a constant challenge for anyone looking to invest in technology and the latter is a recurring issue for educationalists and governments. There is no doubt that modern technologies have had a profound impact on work, leisure and information and so it is increasingly important that this impact is fully explored and understood in the field of education. Around the world there is growing interest in how technology can be effectively harnessed to deliver an education system more in tune with society and the workplace, e-assessment is at the heart of this debate.

Q3: Who is the journal aimed at?

Difficult to pigeonhole the audience really as many people should, and do have an interest in e-assessment. Clearly there will be an interest from those in the educational research community and the launch at

the Computer-Assisted Assessment Conference in Southampton confirmed this with enquiries from delegates in the UK and across Europe. Practitioners in the field, either the assessment industry or educational institutions, already form a core of the membership of the e-Assessment Association and we expect that profile to be reflected in registration for the journal. There has also been interest at a strategic level from Policy makers and government bodies and the technology community through suppliers. Such a breadth of audience supports our initial thoughts behind the rationale for the journal.

Q4: Why has Cambridge Assessment decided to get involved?

Cambridge Assessment has been influential in shaping thinking about the purpose and form of assessment over the years. For much of the last century the purpose and environment for assessment has not changed, but the arrival of modern and ubiquitous technologies since the 1980s has seen a gradual shift in many aspects of education and assessment. The organisation continues to have a vital role to play in reflecting on any shift in practice and influencing thinking on how technology can best support assessment. The International e-Assessment Journal will be one way that we are able to inform thinking on the subject.

Farewell to the Assessment Reform Group

After 21 years of investigation, argument and influence of assessment policy and practice, reviewing research and disseminating findings through conferences, seminars and publications, the Assessment Reform Group has decided to call it a day.



The Assessment Reform Group (ARG) originated in 1989 as the Policy Task Group on Assessment set up by the British Educational Research Association (BERA), and consisted of a voluntary group of researchers. When BERA stopped supporting policy task groups in 1996, the Group adopted the name Assessment Reform Group.

The aim of the ARG was to ensure that assessment policy and practice at all levels took account of relevant research evidence. In pursuit of this aim the main targets for the Group's activity were policy-makers in government and its agencies. It also worked closely with teachers, teacher organisations and local education authority staff to advance understanding of the roles, purposes and impacts of assessment.

The Assessment Reform Group. Back (L-R): Paul Newton, Richard Daugherty, Jo-Anne Baird, John Gardner. Front (L-R): Kathryn Ecclestone, Mary James, Gordon Stobart, Caroline Gipps, Patricia Broadfoot, Wynne Harlen, Paul Black. Not present: Judy Sebba, Dylan Wiliam, Louise Hayward.

A 'farewell' event organised by the Cambridge Assessment Network offered the ARG's friends and supporters plenty of opportunity to consider its history, influence and legacy both in the UK and beyond, and the broader question of what makes for successful assessment reform.

However, there was some questioning of the extent to which policy-making, particularly in England, had changed as a result of the group's efforts.

For David Hargreaves, a former chief executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and a fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge, the position was not simple. "The ARG have won some battles. But the war itself still has to be won," he said.

Summing up, Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research & Development at Cambridge Assessment, said there were reasons for "pessimism and optimism." The "collective intellectual weight" of the ARG had, he

said, helped it to build an important and continuing legacy: "a body of analysis and tangible influence on policy-makers and the research community in the UK and beyond".

Materials from the event, including a write-up of proceedings by education journalist Warwick Mansell, as well as information on the ARG's publications over the past two decades can be found at:

www.assessnet.org.uk/arg/

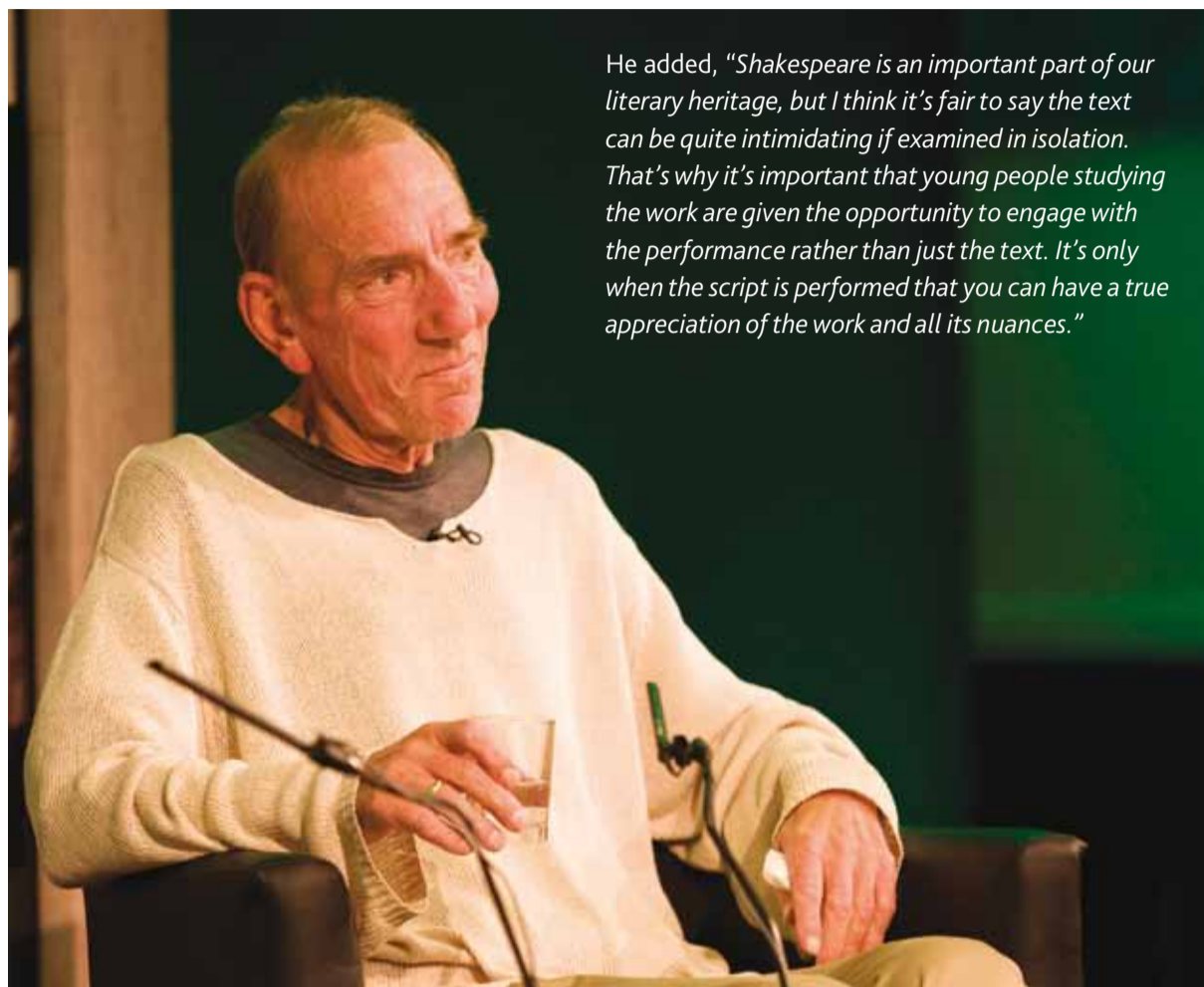
Film star brings Hollywood touch to GCSE English Literature

Pete Postlethwaite OBE – star of Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet*, *The Usual Suspects*, and *Brassed Off* – spoke to teachers about how OCR’s new English Literature GCSE will enable them to bring texts to life, enhancing students’ learning and appreciation of the works of Shakespeare.

Speaking at the National Association for the Teaching of English annual conference, Mr Postlethwaite drew on his experience as both a former teacher and acclaimed actor to talk about adapting Shakespeare for stage and screen.

This relates directly to the ‘Film and live performances of Shakespeare: *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*’ section of OCR’s GCSE English Literature specification, for first teaching from September 2010. This element, which sits within the ‘Literary Heritage Linked Texts’ unit, has been very popular with teachers owing to the diverse range of media that can be explored, from ‘*Throne of Blood*’, the 1957 Samurai film re-interpreting *Macbeth*, to Baz Luhrmann’s ‘*Romeo + Juliet*’. Learners can also apply their analysis to any live performance of the plays.

Mr Postlethwaite said “*Shakespeare provides some great roles for actors because of the scope to make the part your own, and the different ways of interpreting the scripts are one of the reasons the plays have endured. There’s endless scope to create different versions on film and in theatres, and a new vigour brought with each re-invention.*”



He added, “*Shakespeare is an important part of our literary heritage, but I think it’s fair to say the text can be quite intimidating if examined in isolation. That’s why it’s important that young people studying the work are given the opportunity to engage with the performance rather than just the text. It’s only when the script is performed that you can have a true appreciation of the work and all its nuances.*”

Cambridge tests approved for student visas

Ten out of 12 examinations approved by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) as part of a new arrangement for Tier 4 student visa applications are Cambridge English Exams developed by Cambridge ESOL.

From August, certain groups of students from non-EU countries who want to study in the UK for periods of longer than six months will need to prove that their English is at Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) Level B1 or above, using a UKBA-approved secure language test.

In addition to Tier 4 student visa, Cambridge English exams are also recognised by the UK Border Agency as meeting the language requirements for Tier 1 and Tier 2 immigration, covering studying and working in the UK.

The following Cambridge ESOL qualifications have been recognised by the UK Border Agency for the language requirement in this category:

1. Certificate of Proficiency in English
2. Certificate in Advanced English
3. First Certificate in English
4. Preliminary English Test
5. IELTS (Band 4.0 and above)
6. Business English Certificate Higher
7. Business English Certificate Vantage
8. Business English Certificate Preliminary
9. International Certificate in Financial English
10. International Legal English Certificate



Dr Mike Milanovic, Chief Executive of University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations.

Best practice for bilingual education

Cambridge IGCSE is increasingly being adopted in schools throughout Europe as a means of educating students bilingually, often alongside a national curriculum, according to Dr Kevin Stannard, the University of Cambridge International Examinations’ Director of Education.

Speaking at this year’s Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) conference in Germany, Dr Stannard talked about assessment of bilingual programmes from – the international exam board’s – perspective, considering the need to complement national curricula, to support teachers through training and publications, and to provide international benchmarking through qualifications such as Cambridge IGCSE.

The presentation also raised some of the issues facing bilingual learners, teachers and assessors as well as opportunities for working together to maximise learner success.

The event was hosted by the CLIL Consortium, a network of experts who work individually, and jointly, on specific problem-solving and development tasks which concern medium of instruction.

For further details about CLIL visit: www.clilconsortium.jyu.fi/

Challenges of assessment reform

If you didn't manage to get along to the 5th Cambridge Assessment conference the highlights are now available to watch online. Find out what our speakers thought the real challenges of assessment reform were. Hear from:

- Professor Jo-Anne Baird, University of Bristol
- Mike Baker, former BBC Education Editor
- Professor Paul Black, King's College London
- Dr Mary Bousted, Association of Teachers and Lecturers
- Professor Richard Daugherty, Cardiff University
- Dr Philip Davies, Oxford Evidentia Limited
- Dr Geoff Hayward, University of Oxford
- Lord Sutherland of Houndwood
- Isabel Nisbet, Ofqual
- Professor Peter Tymms, University of Durham
- Professor Frank Ventura, University of Malta

You can also watch the panel discussion with Dr Mary Bousted (Association of Teachers and Lecturers), Professor Richard Daugherty (Cardiff University), Isabel Nisbet (Ofqual) and Lord Sutherland of Houndwood, chaired by former BBC Education Correspondent Mike Baker.

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The future of assessments

Two of Cambridge Assessment's leading figures in education will tackle the future of A levels and whether a standard university entrance exam should be introduced to supplement A levels, at a forthcoming Westminster Education Forum.

Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment, and Tim Oates, Group Director of Assessment Research and Development – alongside keynote speakers from UCAS and Ofqual – will address key policy makers and education professionals, employers, student representatives and education commentators at the event on Thursday, 2 December 2010, in central London.

Simon Lebus will talk about the future of A levels, their key purpose; whether they are still a reliable indicator of a student's knowledge and understanding of a subject; and if students and the wider public still have confidence in the qualification.

Tim Oates will address whether it's time to change the university entrance system. He'll look at whether universities should have a more direct role in deciding the content of the qualification; should there be greater freedom for awarding bodies in deciding the structure of A levels; and is a move towards the development of a standardised university admissions test to supplement A levels desirable?

Simon and Tim's presentations will be available to download from the Cambridge Assessment website after the event:

www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

UK interest in Cambridge IGCSE soars

Interest in Cambridge IGCSE in the UK has risen sharply since the Government gave the go-ahead for state schools to offer the qualification. Until now, government rules have meant the IGCSE was only offered in independent schools.

In June 2010 ministers announced that they would be making funding available for state schools to offer the qualification in the core curriculum subjects of English, mathematics, the sciences and ICT.

Currently more than 350 schools are registered to teach Cambridge IGCSE in the UK and it is expected that this will go up to 500 schools within the next 12 months.

Cambridge IGCSE key milestones

- 1985** Cambridge IGCSE pilots begin
- 1988** First Cambridge IGCSE examinations held in June. 5,757 entries worldwide
- 1990** Schools across the world now able to offer Cambridge IGCSE via the British Council
- 1998** UCLES (now Cambridge Assessment) forms CIE to handle international qualifications including Cambridge IGCSE
- 2000** Worldwide entries reach 247,000
- 2005** CIE celebrates two decades of Cambridge IGCSE with more than 750,000 people having achieved the qualification in at least one subject
- 2009** Worldwide entries top 420,000
- 2010** UK Government agrees funding for state schools to offer Cambridge IGCSE

University of Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) Chief Executive, Ann Puntis, said: "We are delighted with the growing number of schools that are joining the global Cambridge learning community. Cambridge IGCSE candidates sit the same examinations as their peers from countries as diverse as the UK, the USA, India, Spain, Sweden, Argentina and New Zealand. We continue to be impressed by the energy and commitment to excellence in education demonstrated by Cambridge IGCSE teachers and learners around the world."

CIE has also seen steady growth in the number of schools offering Cambridge IGCSE worldwide – it is now available in 127 countries. Registration numbers for teacher training events are up too. Around 200 teachers from 90 schools registered for Cambridge IGCSE training events which took place this autumn.

Latina optima est*

To meet the rising demand from schools and pupils the first ever Entry Level qualification in Latin has been launched.

OCR's pre-GCSE level qualification, available from September 2010 for first teaching, is funded for use by the state sector and can be used as a stand-alone qualification or as a stepping stone to further study of the subject at GCSE and A level.

Boris Johnson, Mayor of London and longstanding advocate of the value of Latin, said: "I'm delighted that OCR is introducing the first ever Entry Level Qualification in Latin. It proves how much demand there is for this great subject and will provide the perfect platform for the next generation of Classicists."

The qualification provides students with an introduction to the Latin language, and also includes study of aspects of Roman culture. Schools can choose the topics that they feel will best support their candidates' introduction to the Latin language. Supporting topics include literature – either in translation or in Latin – a Roman site, Roman artefacts, slavery, the gladiators, the Roman army and more. The wide range of materials available to work with means teachers have flexibility to make the course both appealing and fun.

* or in plain English, Latin is best.