

Achieve

Autumn 2011



CAMBRIDGE ASSESSMENT



Welcome to Achieve

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

Learning how to learn

The use of learning games is under-utilised in the classroom.

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Schools and universities champion new 'extended project'

Cambridge Pre-U GPR qualification is a success.

see page 8

Too many exams and not enough education

"Let's forget qualifications and talk about education" says head of UK exam board, OCR.

Speaking at all three main political party conferences this autumn, Mark Dawe said that exams had been overpowering education resulting in a system which was "exam driven, not education driven". His call for a rebalancing of the education system was met with agreement among parliamentarians and college and school leaders.

Joining OCR's parent body Cambridge Assessment, Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and Association of Colleges (AoC) at their 'Paths to Employment: Education for a 21st Century Workforce' event, were Chair of the Education Select Committee, Graham Stuart MP at the Conservative Party conference; Shadow Education Minister, Iain Wright MP at the Labour Party conference; and member of the House of Lords, Baroness Sharp at the Liberal Democrat Party conference.

Graham Stuart MP argued there needs to be a greater emphasis on the quality of teaching provided, rather than an ever growing emphasis on examinations. Mr Stuart went on to highlight that the majority of students do not go on to university and that there must be adequate alternatives – most likely in the form of an expansion of vocational opportunities and various forms of training. He also branded Connexions as an "expensive failure", particularly with regards to offering

careers advice. A better service needs to be provided in the future, Mr Stuart stated.

Iain Wright MP explained that he was unhappy at the "artificial divide" between academic and vocational routes. The academic and university route was no longer applicable to so many students. Any future policy response would

need to encompass the holistic nature of education, creativity, innovation and careers guidance.

Baroness Sharp concluded that there were many routes into higher education and further education, and the important thing was to note that there were different ladders out there.

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Mark Dawe, Chief Executive, OCR.



Roger-François Gauthier, Professor of educational policy at Paris 5 La Sorbonne University, Inspecteur général for national education and research administration (France).

Questioning the French ways of assessing students...

In France there is a strong tradition of centralised examinations; this applies to both academic (specifically the "baccalauréat") and vocational qualifications. However, when compared to the British examinations system, French examinations are different for two reasons: on one hand they are apparently more rigorous as the students have no choice between various compulsory subjects, but on the other hand they appear less rigorous as the final grade is calculated on an average of marks obtained in these various subjects. This system isn't providing the student or the school with precise data about the learner's strengths and weaknesses.

Despite being traditional, this holistic examination approach is no longer suitable for a society that wants to assess both what students know and the performance of the education system.

To move forward the French have to resolve a number of issues about the ways they intend to assess students in the future:

- How to conciliate the traditional examinations, to which the majority of the population seems very attached, with new definitions of schooling in terms of skills and competences? For example, the validation of the common core of knowledge and skills instituted by a law in 2005 prohibits 'compensation' between the 'major competences' that define education before the age of 16.
- From a political point of view, is it possible to change anything in the examination system? One would say "no!" because of this illusive façade of anonymous and centralised examinations with apparent results that are good (maybe artificially good, but still good). But behind this façade there is the double reality of the growing depreciation of the certifications' social meaning and of the fact that post baccalauréat admission to the streams and schools that elites are traditionally recruited from, of course requires from the students a pass in the national examination, but is only decided from the marks he/she gets from continuous assessment.

Further exasperating the issue, it is obvious that in France as well as everywhere else, decisions in these fields cannot be taken any more only on a national basis because international assessments and the objective of international recognition of certifications have to be taken into account.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Online learning won't replace teachers

Online learning is a good addition to the classroom but not a replacement for teachers, says Cambridge ESOL.

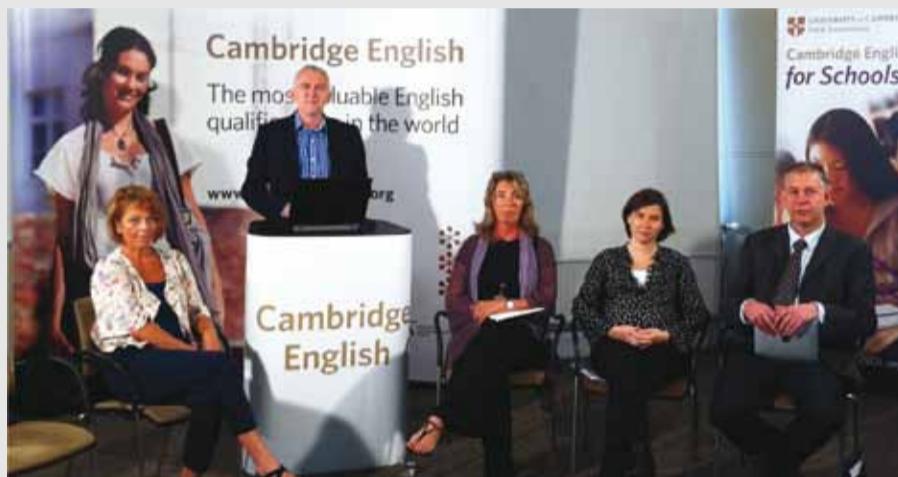
Speaking online at the exam board's virtual conference for teachers this summer, Nigel Pike, Head of Assessment, said: "Over the last few years we've been developing a whole range of online assessment and learning products", a process he described as a "steep learning curve".

He went on to highlight: "While online learning can be a really fantastic addition to learning in the classroom and can help to make language learning and teaching far more accessible, it can never completely take the place or be exactly the same as face to face learning." Nigel referred to the success of the blended Certificate in teaching English to speakers of other languages (CELTA Course Online)

which Cambridge ESOL has recently developed with International House.

Anna Stanton from Kaplan International Colleges spoke about how online games can be introduced in the classroom for younger English learners. Other speakers included Cambridge University Press' Debra Marsh and Nik Peachey from the Bell Education Trust. Audience members all over the world were given the opportunity to ask questions; a lively debate was had.

Conference proceedings and a video of the event can be downloaded from:
www.cambridgeesol.org/teacherconference



The speakers (L:R): Nicky Hockly of Consultants-E; Nigel Pike of Cambridge ESOL; Anna Stanton of Kaplan International Colleges; Debra Marsh of Cambridge University Press; and Nik Peachey of Bell Education Trust.

Medical admissions test for Italian universities

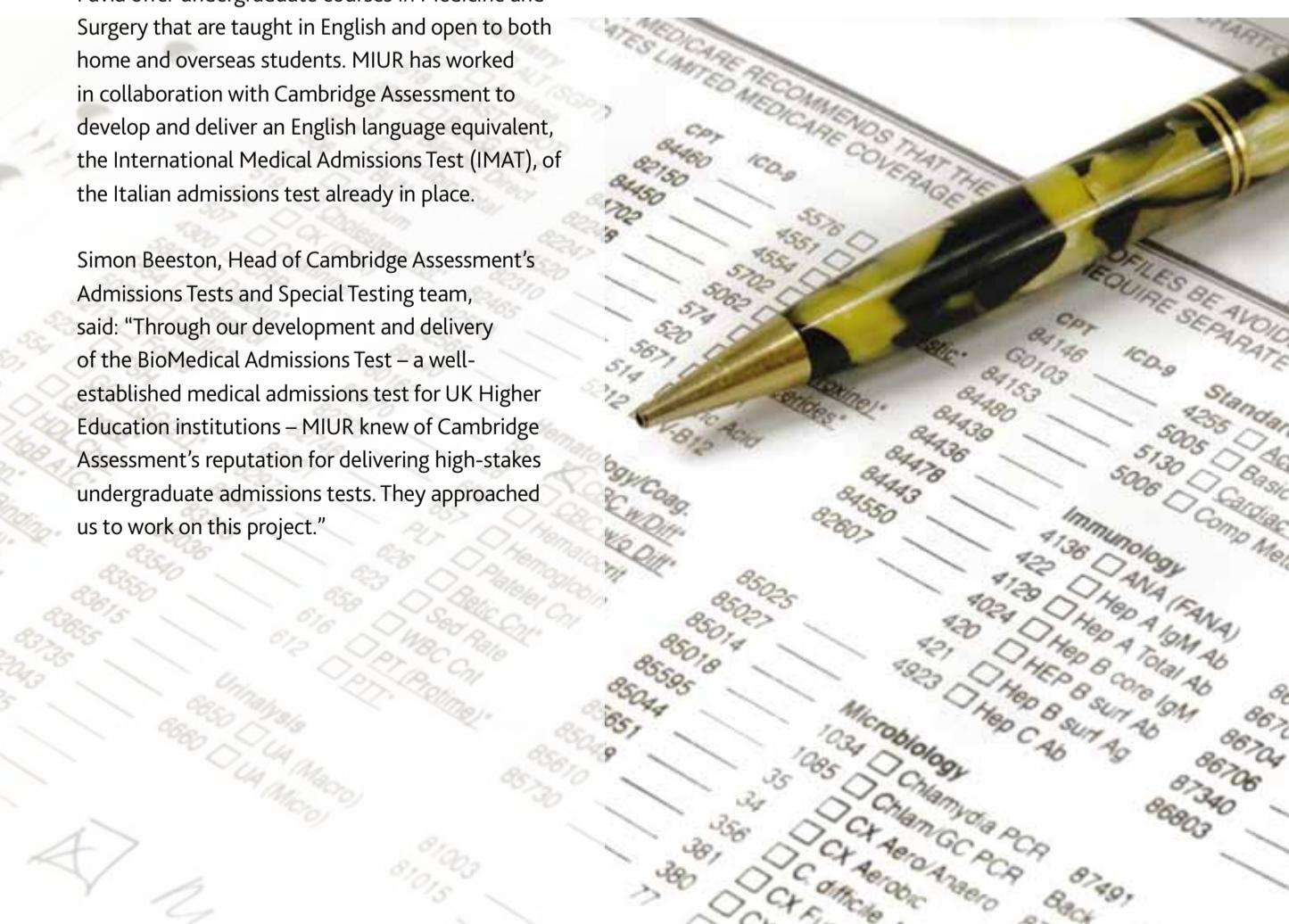
With UK university fees set to rise substantially from 2012 entry, UK students are now more likely to investigate overseas options and enrol with mainland European universities offering equivalent undergraduate courses – with the added bonus of gaining overseas experience.

To help Italian universities differentiate between highly able candidates, Cambridge Assessment has been working in partnership with the Italian Ministry of Higher Education and Research (MIUR) to deliver an admissions test for medical courses.

The Universities of Rome La Sapienza, Milan and Pavia offer undergraduate courses in Medicine and Surgery that are taught in English and open to both home and overseas students. MIUR has worked in collaboration with Cambridge Assessment to develop and deliver an English language equivalent, the International Medical Admissions Test (IMAT), of the Italian admissions test already in place.

Simon Beeston, Head of Cambridge Assessment's Admissions Tests and Special Testing team, said: "Through our development and delivery of the BioMedical Admissions Test – a well-established medical admissions test for UK Higher Education institutions – MIUR knew of Cambridge Assessment's reputation for delivering high-stakes undergraduate admissions tests. They approached us to work on this project."

Daniele Livon, Director General at MIUR, echoed Simon's comments: "We are pleased to be working with Cambridge Assessment and will ensure that our joint efforts deliver useful information for the Universities involved, with a view to expanding out the number of Universities offering an English-language version of the Medicine and Surgery admissions test in 2012."



Too many exams and not enough education

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Mark Dawe explained that the key to helping get people into employment was an education system guided by the three P's: Pathways, Progression and Programmes of learning. Qualifications were about destination and where the learning would take people. He also said that what employers wanted needed to be embedded in the qualification of learning. He concluded that while the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) was right for some and



Mark Dawe, OCR Chief Executive; Warwick Mansell, freelance journalist and Chair; Iain Wright MP, Shadow Education Minister; and Brian Lightman, General Secretary of ASCL.



Fiona McMillan, President of AoC.

could be viewed as an entitlement it wasn't appropriate for all learners. He stressed that schools needed flexibility to meet individual learners' needs and many learners risked being disengaged. If this happened they would not get on the first rung of the ladder let alone get into the workplace.

"The scaling back of the careers service is damaging to the prospects of young people" Iain Wright MP

Brian Lightman explained that many new policy announcements were prescriptive and concerned themselves with very specific details and initiatives, such as the EBacc, but that this was premature in light of the fact that a wider debate had not happened. He said that policy makers should ask what a "good education" means in practice, and that there was too much of a focus on outcomes, league tables and results.

Fiona McMillan explained that there was no single way to achieve career aspirations. Colleges and other institutions need to have clear expectations of what learners need to achieve at the end of their course of study. She also called for the National Curriculum to broaden its focus and encompass a "parity of esteem" between vocational and academic routes. Overall there was a consensus among the political parties and academics that there must be a greater emphasis on a more personalised and flexible approach to learning to equip young people to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing labour market.



Brian Lightman, General Secretary of ASCL and Graham Stuart MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee.

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.



Baroness Sharp of Guildford.



Graham Stuart MP, Chair of the Education Select Committee.

Raising the standard

A group of 11 English language teachers from around the world have been congratulated for helping to raise the standard of English in their countries.

The teachers – who all won the 2011 Cambridge ESOL Preparation Centre Competition – were awarded a cultural trip to Cambridge this summer to take part in a series of activities.

Last year, Cambridge ESOL invited preparation centres to write 100 words on how Cambridge ESOL exams have made a difference to students and teachers in their preparation centre.



The full list of winners are: Argentina with Bibiana Alejandra Cordero and Andrea Fernanda Hurst; Greece with Dionysia Samara; Ireland with Jonathan O'Brien; Malaysia with Michael S. Anthony; Mexico with Adriana Cerna; Morocco with Heike Johannsen-Tarhbalouti; Russia with Tatyana Permyakova; Serbia with Dragana Vujkovic-Bukvin; Spain with Javier Gallego Álvarez; and Sweden with Verica Skocic.

Whilst in Cambridge, the winning teachers attended a teaching master class seminar where they learnt some useful tips to take back to the classroom. Cambridge ESOL's Mariana Calderon, who organised the competition, said: "Our preparation centres make a big difference in helping to raise the standard of English all over the world."

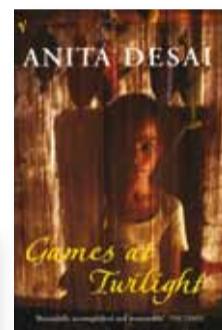
World literature broadens students' outlook

Students are learning literature from different countries and cultures as part of a new qualification.

The Cambridge IGCSE in World Literature has been developed by University of Cambridge International Examinations, with the help of a group of schools in Hong Kong who are currently piloting it for first examination in 2012.

Set texts include works by authors from France, India, Japan, Norway and South Africa – all translated into English. Outside of the set texts there is great potential for teachers to design the course around their learners' interests.

Schools in mainland China, India, Argentina, The Netherlands, Thailand and the UK have now joined the pilot for the 2013 assessment. Teachers say they like the idea of exposing students to great literary works from different national and cultural traditions.



Egyptians embrace English learning

The number of language learners in Egypt taking Cambridge English tests has increased rapidly between 2009 and 2011.

Dr Michael Milanovic, CEO of Cambridge ESOL, says: "This reflects a global trend which is seeing more and more people needing to show their proficiency in English by taking an internationally recognised language examination. Egyptian students are fully embracing this opportunity which opens doors to employability and increased mobility in the international labour market."

Dr Milanovic and his Cambridge colleague Dr Hanan Khalifa joined a business delegation accompanying the Lord Mayor of the City of London to Cairo this October. The two-day event included key meetings with the Governor of the Central Bank of Egypt and the Minister of Finance. Cambridge ESOL offers English exams for general, academic and business purposes through their examination centres in Egypt – namely British Council and the School of Continuing Education at the AUC. They also work closely with organisations and schools in Egypt to develop bespoke language assessment solutions.

Cambridge ESOL has been involved in a number of high profile projects across Egypt which help to raise the standard of English:

- In 2009, along with their sister organisation, University of Cambridge International Examinations, they worked on a pioneering programme with Egypt's Education Development Fund to develop a new bilingual school system which is accessible to the average household. This involved producing a bespoke English language curriculum and assessment programme for pupils from ages 4–18, closely linked to international standards.
- They have also developed the assessment tools for bilingual education programmes for a number of schools that provide national and international curriculums. This has included working with schools like Modern School of Egypt 2000 and École Oasis Internationale.
- Cambridge ESOL is also currently working with the Minister of Higher Education on their Pathways to Higher education programme which will benefit up to 1,000 students. For this project Cambridge is working with the British Council Cairo to deliver teacher and student training – plus a blended learning course which leads to a language qualification that is recognised by employers all over the world.
- Several private universities in Egypt have integrated Cambridge English standards into their language provision. This includes The Future University of Egypt who currently uses the Cambridge English: Preliminary qualification.



Learning how to learn

The use of learning games is under-utilised in the classroom, according to Dr Paul Howard-Jones, co-ordinator of the NeuroEducational Research Network at the University of Bristol.

Speaking at the Cambridge Teachers' Conference on 11–13 September 2011, Dr Howard-Jones said that teachers are now competing with such effective media entertainment outside the classroom that they need to find more exciting ways to engage children inside the classroom. He said: "I think there is a lot of evidence to show that using different types of media does support learning."

The conference, hosted by University of Cambridge International Examinations in Cambridge, focused on the relationship between neuroscience and education. Dr Howard-Jones said there was benefit in children understanding how their brains work, and in neuroscience researchers consulting with teachers to get their views on how knowledge of the brain impacts on learning.

"I think that the most important thing about the plasticity of the brain is that it undermines this idea that learners have a biological limit to what they can achieve... In actual fact, you construct your own brain. The experiences that you choose to expose yourself to, your application, will change the function, the connectivity and the structure of your brain."



More than 200 teachers from over 50 countries attended the largest ever Cambridge Teachers' Conference. They came from 130 schools around the world to hear experts from the University of Bristol and the University of Cambridge share the latest brain research and discuss its implications for education.

Mr Sven Primdal, Principal from Skals Efterskole, Denmark said: "I have been impressed by everything I have experienced over the past few days. Connecting

with teachers from around the world provides a great opportunity to reflect on your own teaching methods, challenge things that could be improved and build on what has already been achieved. I will also take away interesting ideas from the key note speakers about how psychology impacts on learning in the classroom."

Go to www.cie.org.uk/2011CTC to download resources from the conference.

The rise of 'curriculum thinking'

Critics say that the current focus on assessment in Britain means that public debate is overlooking how schools are engaging young people and preparing them for the future.

Cambridge Assessment's concerns over the narrowness of the debate are leading it to investigate the issues in greater depth.

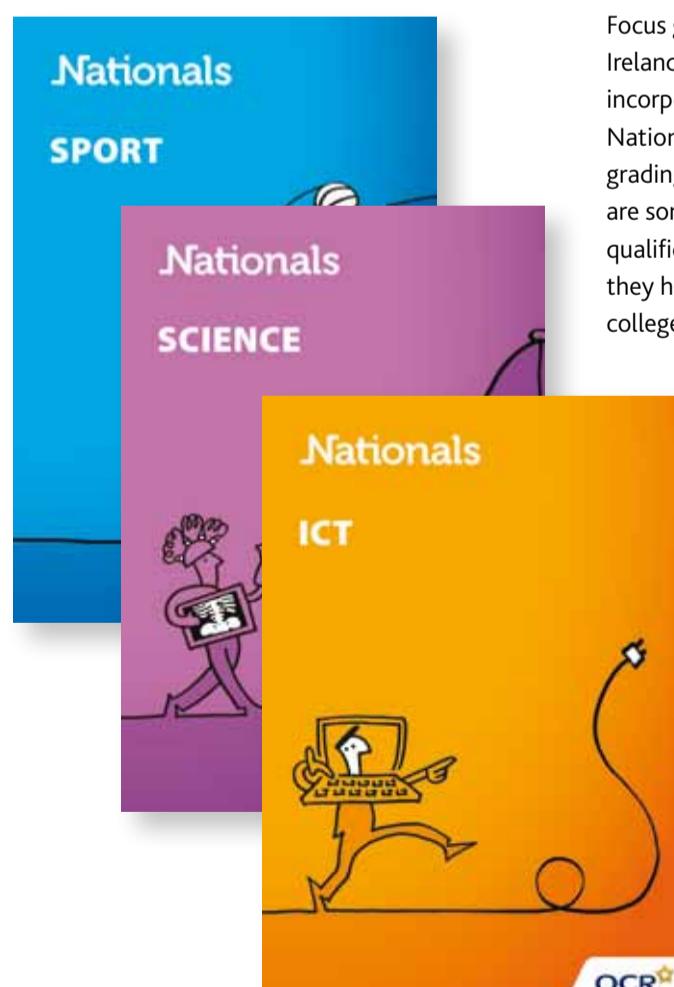
"What is needed is clarity over a qualification's educational purpose: does it deliver a coherent programme of learning; is there a clear progression route; and most importantly is it the right 'programme' for the learner?", said Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive.

There is ample evidence that curriculum is at the heart of the learning experience a school offers its learners, and at the heart of the mission and vision of the school. Good curricula develop learners' understanding, knowledge and skills. The organisation is to examine what a good curriculum should look like. It will draw on its international educational expertise and invite interested parties to submit evidence and papers on what they believe.

Further details about the event, scheduled for early 2012, can be found on: www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk

Next generation of vocational qualifications

The landscape for vocational education is changing fast in the UK, shaped in part by the Wolf Report on vocational education and the introduction of the EBacc. In response, OCR Nationals are being redeveloped.



Focus groups in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are providing feedback which will be incorporated into key aspects of the updated Nationals range including content, structure, grading and styles of assessment. OCR Nationals are some of the most popular vocational qualifications in the UK. Over the last six years, they have been used by over 3,000 schools and colleges to recognise the practical, real life skills of over 750,000 students. OCR is building on that success to create a second generation of this vocational range, ensuring the qualifications continue to test skills that are relevant to the needs of learners, and to those of employers and higher education.

OCR will be showcasing a new Nationals range for 14 to 16 year olds at events throughout Autumn/Winter 2012. This significant redevelopment programme will be completed in the coming year and these qualifications will be available for first teaching in schools and colleges from September 2012.

Education not technology must dominate online exams

UK schools simply do not yet have enough machines to allow high numbers of students to take exams online at the same time. Tests must be taken at the same time to ensure fairness, says head of international exams group.



Simon Lebus, Group Chief Executive, Cambridge Assessment.

Speaking at the Westminster Education Forum event in London in September, Simon Lebus, Cambridge Assessment's Group Chief Executive, said: "There's no point having the technology right if we haven't got the ideology and philosophy right. In fact, we should only ever switch where high stakes e-assessment is more effective than pen and paper."

"There's no point having the technology right if we haven't got the ideology and philosophy right."

Despite technology playing a key part in examination administrative processes with millions of GCSE exam papers being marked online every year, the use of computer-based testing in assessments leading directly to higher education or employment (high stakes) remains low. In the UK, Simon pointed out, we are beginning to move to an internet-enabled model of e-assessment, using students' own laptops. Computer-based testing can bring benefits to education by offering on-demand testing, quicker turnaround of results, better and authentic item types and improved security.

In terms of high-stakes examinations it is important, Simon warned, to ensure that tests are 'fit for purpose' and used to measure subject knowledge, not students' ICT skills. Most importantly, he added, is that the educational benefit should drive e-assessment, not technological ability.

Simon predicts that over the next 10–15 years, the UK will continue to see a migration, albeit a slow one, towards e-assessment in high stakes examinations, with different subjects migrating at different paces.

Central Asia targets international education

A network of new schools is opening across Kazakhstan as part of a new initiative to reform education.

The Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools (NIS) – launched by the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev – aim is to provide a world class education offering a new model of school organisation and curriculum. Twenty schools are planned in total, of which six are already open. They will prepare students for entry to the new Nazarbayev University in Astana, as well as for study abroad.

University of Cambridge International Examinations will develop curriculum and assessments for the new schools, aligned to international standards. Teaching will be in Kazakh and Russian, while many classes in the high schools will also be taught in English. The aim is to develop trilingual students who are globally aware, and able to compete with their peers around the world. Cambridge qualifications will be offered alongside the national curriculum.

Teacher training is a vital element of education reform and so Centres of Excellence are being set up in Kazakhstan to help raise standards of teaching. University of Cambridge International Examinations and the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education are working together to develop and deliver the teacher training. Almost 300 Kazakhstani teachers will be trained as teacher trainers, leading to the professional development of thousands of teachers in NIS and state schools across Kazakhstan.



In the short-term, Cambridge is training a group of teachers to teach Cambridge International AS level Global Perspectives. This new qualification will develop the thinking skills and English language skills of students who are preparing to enter Nazarbayev University.

Global education reform is a growing area of activity for the Cambridge Assessment Group with governments worldwide seeking out the organisation's expertise in international education.

Cambridge celebrates the 10th Anniversary of European Day of Languages with full support from EU Institutions

A language survey of over 650 people working in the European Parliament – many of whom are multilingual – has shown a huge range of languages that people still want to learn. This is really encouraging for multilingualism, according to Cambridge ESOL who conducted the survey.

The survey was carried out by Cambridge ESOL at 'Supporting multilingualism through language assessment' – their annual event held at the European Parliament this September in celebration of multilingualism.

Spanish and Italian were the top two languages that adults surveyed wanted to learn. The results also showed a growing demand for people wanting to

learn Chinese and Arabic; an interest in sign language and other languages such as Catalan and Welsh. Overall, over 40 languages were reported in the responses to the survey questionnaire.

Juliet Wilson, a Director at Cambridge ESOL says: "Our survey showed there is a huge range of languages that people want to learn and this extends beyond the most commonly spoken languages."



The event was hosted by MEP Hannu Takkula and MEP Miguel Ángel Martínez in conjunction with Cambridge ESOL and the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE).

Picture left to right: Dr Nick Saville of Cambridge ESOL, MEP Miguel Ángel Martínez, Mr Jan Truszczyński, Director-General for Education, Training, Culture and Youth at the European Commission, Ms Olga Cosmidou, Director General, Directorate General for Interpretation and Conferences Culture and Youth at the European Commission and MEP Hannu Takkula.

Interview with...

The JCB Academy in Rocester, Staffordshire, occupies one of the earliest factories in the world – Sir Richard Arkwright's revolutionary water-powered textile mill dates back to the 1780s. More than 225 years later, the JCB Academy is quietly achieving a revolution of its own by giving, ultimately, over 600 students between the ages of 14 and 19 a unique balance of technical and academic education, to "develop engineers and business leaders for the future".



Paul Pritchard, JCB Academy's Chair of Governors, tells Achieve what the Academy is all about.

How did the JCB Academy come about?

For three years from about 2004 onwards, JCB was failing to attract the usual calibre of applications from school leavers to join the business. There were plenty of applications but not enough showing the right aptitude or attitude. As Head of JCB's Learning and Development Division I had seen a gradual decline in this area even though JCB had consistently worked within the local schools. But this lack of suitable candidates was new. So we met with local schools to see how we could address the problem and we finally welcomed our first students in September 2010.

Is it based on a European model?

Within my learning and development role at JCB I visited major manufacturers in Germany and France but above all we received considerable inspiration from Sweden. It came from what Volvo had achieved in

Gothenburg. The Swedish economy is still very focused on engineering – with companies like Saab, SKF, Scania and Ericsson as well as Volvo and many others. Within the Volvo factory in Gothenburg, they had created GTG (standing for the Gothenburg Technical Gymnasium) an academy for young people. This was a real influence in our thinking as we developed the model for the JCB Academy. GTG offers a series of Education Programmes within their Academy and training workshops alongside the main Volvo factory where students can put theory into practice for themselves. They are allowed to work on real live projects which help them to apply and retain knowledge. The curriculum had been designed in conjunction with industry and the universities in the country. I remember asking the students why they had chosen to attend GTG. They made two points; it made them far more employable and it guaranteed them a place on an engineering course at any Swedish university – that became our vision.

Does the JCB Academy follow the National Curriculum?

Yes we do, but with an emphasis on engineering and business. We've been able to develop our own specialist curriculum which is 60 per cent technical and 40 per cent academic with the help of our partners and with UK exam board OCR. It has been very exciting to be able to map across the activities students do to fit in with the National Curriculum. The year is divided into five eight week terms. In each term, students work on a project or challenge. What's been so exciting is that, with the help of OCR and specialists within the local authorities and our business partners, we've been able to map student activities on these projects to meet assessment requirements and offer this unique curriculum.

Our students currently take the engineering diploma, plus a business diploma, Maths, English, two Sciences, IT, plus entitlement subjects. We use OCR qualifications to support these subjects. We will appear in national league tables but we will not be eligible at present for EBaccs because of the limited humanities requirement. I would argue we are delivering 'living engineering, manufacturing and business history' within our broad offering. We are teaching students in the birthplace of the industrial revolution, in Arkwright's third mill. There is History all around us.

There's also opportunity for other interests including musical expression, and sport. If students wish to study an A level subject we don't offer, we'll work with our local High school, Thomas Alleynes, who offer Psychology and other more specialised options.

How would you rate the JCB Academy?

We will receive the first full exam results in summer 2012 and I'm sure we will be a very high performing school. But our aim is two-fold; to produce employable young people and many who can progress on their studies in engineering at a higher level either at our best Universities or FE Colleges.

So far, the venture has been very popular. We've learnt an enormous amount during these first few start up years and progressed tremendously. If you had told me a year ago where we would be now and how much we would have achieved, I would have been more than thrilled and satisfied, but there is much still to learn and do. This is not a short term project but one which will last for generations.

Multilingualism boost in Krakow

Multilingualism is not only important for cultural and social cohesion purposes, but is becoming a key factor for jobs and growth in Europe, says an official of the European Commission.

Pierre Mairesse – Director for Lifelong Learning: Horizontal Issues and 2020 Strategy at the European Commission, was speaking at a conference in Krakow organised by Cambridge ESOL and its partners in the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) this summer.



Pierre Mairesse, Director for Lifelong Learning at the European Commission.

On the European Commission's various initiatives in support of language learning, he said: "One of those actions is the SurveyLang study [the European Survey on Language Competences] which should deliver results next year and for which support of ALTE in general, and of ESOL from the Cambridge University in particular, is really appreciated."

ALTE's 4th International Conference focussed on the importance of using frameworks when testing language ability, especially in the case of examinations for high stakes purposes such as immigration. The three-day event included over 100 parallel presentations and nearly 400 delegates were welcomed by conference host's the Jagiellonian University.

Further reports on the event will be published on the ALTE website, visit: www.ALTE.org/2011

Help with fees

Eight of the West Midlands' brightest students who are taking up their places at Cambridge University this week have received bursaries from OCR towards their tuition fees.

Each of the students received a bursary of £3,375 this year. Their individual tuition fees will be paid for the lifetime of their undergraduate studies. The award fund, arising from OCR's historical association with the West Midlands Exam Board, helps talented students in the region to make the most of their studies.

The students, from schools and colleges in Alcester, Birmingham, Coventry, Hereford and Stratford-upon-Avon, were presented with their awards at a ceremony held at OCR's office in Coventry.



Have your say on 'real world maths'

Too many people have such poor numeracy skills that they can't enjoy the subject, take it into further education or even their workplace. Our UK exam board, OCR, believes that maths must be fit for the 'real world'. We think it's time for action and we'd love to hear your thoughts and opinions on what should be taught, and how.

OCR's Chief Executive Mark Dawe will share your views with leading mathematicians at the first Computer-based Maths Education Summit at the Royal Institution in London on 10–11 November 2011.

The Summit is organised by computerbased math.org a project which aims to build a completely new curriculum away from the historical hand-calculating techniques towards relevant methods in today's world. And this is your chance to contribute. Visit OCR's website to have your say on 'real world maths.'

www.ocr.org.uk/realworldmaths

CONTACT US

Please feel free to phone, write or email at any time:

Bene't Steinberg or Rebecca Birkett-Smith
Public Affairs
1 Regent Street
Cambridge
CB2 1GG

Tel: +44 (0)1223 556018 (direct)
public.affairs@cambridgeassessment.org.uk



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Schools and universities champion new 'extended project'

A new qualification designed to help prepare students for the jump to higher study was one of the most popular Cambridge Pre-U subjects in 2011.

The Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives and Research (GPR) qualification, developed by University of Cambridge International Examinations, is taught



over two years. The course develops research and thinking skills during the first year, preparing students for the extended project in the second year (the Research Report).

Students at Simon Langton Grammar School in Canterbury, England, entered Cambridge Pre-U GPR in June 2011. The head, Ken Moffat, said it had given students the ability to do "proper academic research".

A group of representatives from top US universities – the US Higher Education Advisory Council (HEAC) – is one of the bodies working with University of Cambridge International Examinations to help shape Cambridge Pre-U GPR.

Christoph Guttentag, Dean of Undergraduate Admissions, Duke University – a member of the HEAC – said they are very happy with the qualification: "One of the advantages of Cambridge Pre-U GPR is the degree to which it addresses not just multiple subjects, but the relationships between subjects. It has a practical element to it, a global element to it, a writing intensive element to it, a critical element... I know professors like to see their students well prepared in those areas."

Entries for Cambridge Pre-U in the June 2011 exam series grew by 34 per cent on June 2010, with 50 per cent more schools entering candidates than the previous year.

And as of September 2011, schools will also have the option of entering students for a one-year stand-alone Cambridge Pre-U Global Perspectives Short Course.



the publishers have shown their understanding of the needs of teachers and students, particularly in challenging economic times."

As well as a money-saving move, the use of new technology is recognised as providing a familiar and flexible format for today's students, and helps the green credentials of schools at the same time.

eBooks are a collaboration between OCR and educational publishers Hodder Education and Oxford University Press.

In the week of the launch, a total of 75,000 orders were placed, averaging over 10,000 orders a day. The eBooks are available across a range of subjects. To find out more, visit: www.ocr.org.uk/ebooks

First free A level eBooks

Free e-versions of AS and A2 textbooks will be available to all schools teaching OCR A levels this autumn.

The offer of free eBooks to support A levels – a first for a major exam board – has been welcomed by cash-strapped schools. In a survey before the official launch of the scheme, over 1,700 schools and colleges expressed their concerns about the impact of budget cuts on textbooks. More than 90 per cent believed free resources would help their students. Over 75 per cent thought that the withdrawal of the Education Maintenance Allowance would adversely affect students' ability to buy textbooks.

David Igoe, Chief Executive of the Sixth Form Colleges' Forum commented: "By working together, OCR and

Datuk Ibrahim Bin Ahmad, Director General of MARA (left) – a government agency established to aid and train Malays in the areas of business and industry which also operates several junior colleges and two universities in Malaysia – signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Cambridge Assessment's, Group Chief Executive Simon Lebus (right). The MoU initiates discussion about the introduction of Cambridge IGCSE into all 45 MARA Junior Science Colleges in Malaysia.

Malaysia adopts a Cambridge approach

