

# Research News

**Karen Barden** Research Division

## Conferences and seminars

### Cambridge Assessment's Conference 2014

The seventh Cambridge Assessment Conference took place in October with the theme of International Education: Interpretation, Importance and Impact. We welcomed over a hundred industry leaders from fifteen countries who gathered in Cambridge to discuss the challenges and opportunities that education without borders creates, and to explore its different facets and impact on local governments, training providers and students worldwide.

An understanding of an international education in the context of global issues was presented by keynote speaker David Smith, Economics Editor, The Sunday Times. An interpretation of an international education was discussed by Marc Tucker, President and CEO of the National Center on Education and the Economy, and Dr David Graddol, Director of The English Company (UK) Limited. Isabel Nisbet of the A Level Content Advisory Board, Professor Jeremy Hodgen, Professor of Mathematics Education, King's College London and Dr Karin Zimmer, Researcher, German Institute for International Pedagogical Research, each considered the importance of an international education and the improvement of national systems.

Case studies from around the world were explored by Dr Stephen Burr, Managing Director of Reddam House Europe; David Barrs, Head Teacher at the Anglo European School; Dino Varkey, Group Executive Director and Board Member, GEMS Education and Gisella Langé, Foreign Languages Inspector, Italian Ministry of Education.

The most unique aspect of the day was the contributions via video-links and social media from some of our schools in India, Egypt, South Africa, Argentina and Mexico. Having contributors from so many different countries and time zones made it a challenging programme but the technology all worked on the day and there was much debate about how international education will continue to grow and that it has something positive and distinctive to contribute.

Further details, podcasts and an opportunity to share your story on what international education means to you, can be found on our website: [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/conference2014/](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/conference2014/)

### Kaleidoscope Graduate Student Research Conference

The Kaleidoscope Research Conference was held at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge in May. Magda Werno presented a paper on *Entering secondary education in England as a non-native speaker: A case study of transitional experiences and initial support*.

### Professional Practice, Education and Learning (ProPEL) Conference

The Second International ProPEL Conference took place in Stirling, Scotland in June. It provided an opportunity to debate leading edge

studies in professional and vocational learning, practice and education. Martin Johnson presented a paper entitled *The work of making it happen*.

### European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI) – SIG 4: Higher Education

This conference was held in Leuven, Belgium in August and explored the theme of Assessing Transitions in Learning. Tom Sutch presented a paper on *The effect of specialism and attainment in secondary school on the choice of HE institution and field of study*.

### European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI) – SIG 1: Assessment & Evaluation

In August, Frances Wilson and Jackie Greatorex attended the EARLI SIG 1 Conference in Madrid, Spain. The main themes were teachers' assessment literacy, professional learning communities and requirements for professional development. Frances presented a paper entitled *Teachers' use of differentiated assessment: the tiering model*. Jackie presented two papers; one on *Context in Maths exam questions* and the second entitled *Around the world in Cambridge International A Level Mathematics: teachers' views*.

### European Conference on Educational Research (ECER)

Held in Porto, Portugal in September, the ECER Conference provided an opportunity to debate The Past, the Present and Future of Educational Research. Carmen Vidal Rodeiro presented a paper on *Academic and vocational pathways to higher education and their impact on the choice of institution and field of study*. Simon Child's paper presentation was entitled *Framing educational change: Teacher and employer voices in the development of new courses in English for 16-year-olds*.

### British Educational Research Association (BERA)

BERA celebrated the 40th anniversary of its Annual Conference by exploring the advances made in educational research since 1974. The conference was held from 23–25 September at the Institute of Education, University of London. Colleagues from the Research Division presented the following papers:

Tom Benton: *The relationship between time in education and achievement in PISA in England*.

Ellie Darlington: *Differences between A level and undergraduate Mathematics questions: doing, reproducing or practising Mathematics and Shortcomings of the approaches to learning framework in the context of undergraduate Mathematics*.

Tim Gill: *An investigation of the effect of early entry on overall GCSE performance, using a Propensity Score Matching method*.

Jackie Greatorex: *Context in Maths exam questions*.

Nicky Rushton and Frances Wilson: *Teachers' and employers' views on the transition from GCSE Mathematics to A level Mathematics and employment*.

Carmen Vidal Rodeiro: *Progression routes to post-16 Science qualifications.*

Carmen Vidal Rodeiro, Tom Sutch and Nadir Zanini: *Pathways to Higher Education: the effect of different prior qualifications on institution and field of study.*

Frances Wilson and Vikas Dhawan: *Capping of achievement through tiering at GCSE.*

Nadir Zanini: *How do A level subjects and grades determine university choices?*

Tom Benton also presented a poster on *Evaluating the reliability of PISA using simple methods.*

## Association for Educational Assessment – Europe (AEA-Europe)

The 15th AEA-Europe Annual Conference took place in Tallinn, Estonia in November with the theme of Assessment of students in a 21st Century world. Several colleagues from Cambridge Assessment attended the conference and the following papers were presented:

Tom Bramley: *Evaluating the 'adjacent levels' model for differentiated assessment.*

Victoria Crisp: *Judgement in the assessment of 'harder to examine' skills: what do assessors pay attention to?*

Victoria Crisp and Stuart Shaw: *Evaluating assessments in the 21st Century: Reflections on a framework for validation – 5 years on.*

Martin Johnson and Beth Black: *How do examiners align their marking judgements remotely? Insights into examiners' feedback interactions for remote standardisation.*

Tim Oates: *Can 21st Century science qualifications exist without assessment of practical science skills?*

Stuart Shaw and Paul Newton (Institute of Education, University of London): *21st Century Evaluation: towards a neo-Messickian framework for the evaluation of testing policy.*

The following posters were also presented:

Sarah Hughes and Stuart Shaw: *To remark or review? Modelling examiner behaviour.*

Stuart Shaw and Paul Newton (Institute of Education, University of London): *Tracing the trajectory of the evolution of validity: key phases in the history of validity theory.*

## Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE)

The 2014 SRHE conference was held in Newport, Wales in December. The conference explored the theme of Inspiring future generations; embracing plurality and difference in higher education. Nadir Zanini presented a paper on *The role of the A\* grade at A level as a predictor of university performance.*

Further information on all conference papers can be found on our website: [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/all-published-resources/conference-papers/](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/all-published-resources/conference-papers/)

## Publications

The following articles have been published since Issue 18 of *Research Matters*:

Benton, T. Examining the impact of entry level qualifications on educational aspirations. *Educational Research*, 56(3), 259–276.

Benton, T. An Empirical Assessment of Guttman's Lambda 4 Reliability Coefficient in Millsap, R.E., Bolt, D.M., van der Ark, L.A., and Wang, W-C (Eds.) (2015). *Quantitative Psychology Research. The 78th Annual Meeting of the Psychometric Society* (pp.301–310). Springer: New York. doi: 10.1007/978-3-319-07503-7\_19

Darlington, E. Contrasts in mathematical challenges in A-level Mathematics and Further Mathematics, and undergraduate Mathematics examinations. *Teaching Mathematics and its Applications*, 33(4), 219–229. doi:10.1093/teamat/hru021

Johnson, M (2014). Insights into contextualised learning: how do professional examiners construct shared understanding through feedback? *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 11(4), 363–378. Available online at: <http://learning1060.rssing.com/browser.php?indx=4980578&last=1&item=5>

Johnson, M (2014). A case study of inter-examiner feedback from a UK context: Mixing research methods to gain insights into situated learning interactions. *Formation et pratiques d'enseignement en questions*, 17, 67–88. Available online at: [http://www.revuedeshp.ch/site-fpeq-n/Site\\_FPEQ/17\\_files/05-Johnson.pdf](http://www.revuedeshp.ch/site-fpeq-n/Site_FPEQ/17_files/05-Johnson.pdf)

Shaw, S. D., Warren, J. and Gill, T. (2014). Assessing the Impact of the Cambridge International Acceleration Program on U.S. University Determinants of Success: A Multi-Level Modelling Approach. *College and University Educating the Modern Higher Education Administration Professional*, 89(4), 38–56. Available online at: [https://aacrao-web.s3.amazonaws.com/files/yUcGnGuwS0MfCRDvS4gn\\_CUJ8904-Web.pdf](https://aacrao-web.s3.amazonaws.com/files/yUcGnGuwS0MfCRDvS4gn_CUJ8904-Web.pdf)

Suto, I., Elliott, G., Rushton, N., and Mehta, S. Course struggle, exam stress, or a fear of the unknown? A study of A level students' assessment preferences and the reasons behind them. *Educational Futures, British Education Studies Association*, 6(2), 21–43. Available online at: [http://educationstudies.org.uk/?post\\_type=journal&p=2748](http://educationstudies.org.uk/?post_type=journal&p=2748)

Warwick P., Shaw, S. D. and Johnson, M. (2014). Assessment for Learning in International Contexts: exploring shared and divergent dimensions in teacher values and practices. *The Curriculum Journal*, 25(4), 1–31. doi:10.1080/09585176.2014.975732

Further information on all journal papers and book chapters can be found on our website: [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/all-published-resources/journal-papers-and-book-chapters/](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/all-published-resources/journal-papers-and-book-chapters/)

Reports of research carried out by the Research Division for Cambridge Assessment and its Business Streams, or externally funded research carried out for third parties including the regulators in the UK and many ministries overseas, are also available from our website: [www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/all-published-resources/research-reports/](http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/our-research/all-published-resources/research-reports/)