

staff about proposed new research is of great importance and feeds directly into decisions about future programmes. Engaging other professional staff in research activities is thus instrumental in the sharing of professional expertise both within CIE and within the wider Cambridge Assessment organisation.

On a final note, a vital component in the research programme is the

publication of research outcomes. The importance of disseminating findings from work already undertaken and, more importantly, the recommendations which result from that work cannot be understated. A number of papers in various journals and conference proceedings facilitate the sharing of CIE research and international practice.

RESEARCH NEWS

Research News

Conferences and seminars

House of Commons Research Seminar

The fourth House of Commons Research Seminar, chaired by Barry Sheerman MP, Chair of the Children, Schools and Families Select Committee, took place on July 1st 2008. The seminar, which was on the topic of what makes government initiatives succeed or fail, was attended by 60 key senior education professionals and MPs, generating a lively debate. Speakers included Kathy Sylva, Sue Burroughs Lange and Philip Davies.

They each gave their different perspectives on what it is that makes Government initiatives succeed and take root in mainstream practice, how the best cutting edge research coming out of institutions can be adopted by policy-makers and why sometimes ideas that appear to be beneficial when seen from a research perspective are not taken up by Government.

Professor Kathy Sylva talked about models for how researchers and policy makers can work effectively together. She used the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education Project, commissioned in 1996 – and still ongoing – as a case study.

Dr Sue Burroughs Lange of the Institute of Education outlined her experiences in trying to encourage the uptake of the Reading Recovery programme.

Philip Davies of the American Institutes for Research, who served in the Strategy Unit at the Cabinet Office, gave a presentation based on his experiences of evidence based policy making.

European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI)/Northumbria Assessment Conference

Beth Black attended the Fourth Biennial Joint EARLI / Northumbria Assessment conference in Berlin in August and presented research on using an adapted rank ordering method to investigate January versus June awarding standards.

British Educational Research Association Conference (BERA)

In September eleven researchers from the Research Division presented papers at the annual BERA conference which was held at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh.

European Conference on Educational Research (ECER)

Martin Johnson attended the ECER conference at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden in September and presented a paper entitled: *A case of positive washback: an exploration of pre-release examinations on geography class room practice.*

International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA)

The 34th IAEA Annual Conference took place from 7th–12th September at Robinson College, University of Cambridge (see page 2). The conference is a major event in assessment, bringing together leading assessment and education experts and providers of examinations from across the world.

Researchers from Assessment Research and Development attended the conference and presented papers covering a wide range of themes. See <http://iaea2008.cambridgeassessment.org.uk> for further details of the papers and presentations.

Association for Educational Assessment – Europe (AEA-Europe)

In November Sylvia Green and Tim Oates attended the 9th AEA-Europe conference in Hisar, Bulgaria. The theme of the conferences was: *Achieving quality in assessment: validity and standards.* Sylvia Green presented a paper on *Aspects of Writing: Beyond an atomistic approach to evaluate qualities of features of writing.*

Forthcoming conference

The 2009 Cambridge Assessment Conference will take place on Monday 19th October 2009 at Robinson College, Cambridge. Further details will follow in the next issue of *Research Matters*, or contact the Cambridge Assessment Network at: thenetwork@cambridgeassessment.org.uk.

Publications

The following articles have been published since Issue 6 of *Research Matters*:

Black, B. and Bramley, T. (2008). Investigating a judgemental rank-ordering method for maintaining standards in UK examination. *Research Papers in Education: Policy and Practice*, **23**, 3, 357–373.

Crisp, V. (2008). Exploring the nature of examiner thinking during the process of examination marking. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, **38**, 2, 247–264.

Greatorex, J. and Bell, J.F. (2008). What makes AS marking reliable? An experiment with some aspects of the standardisation process. *Research Papers in Education: Policy and Practice*, **23**, 3, 333–355.

Suto, W.M.I. and Nádas, R. (2008). An exploration of self-confidence and insight into marking accuracy among GCSE maths and physics markers. *Magyar Pedagógia*, July–August.

Suto, W.M.I. and Greatorex, J. (2008). What goes through an examiner's mind? Using verbal protocols to gain insights into the GCSE marking process. *British Educational Research Journal*, **34**, 2, 213–233.